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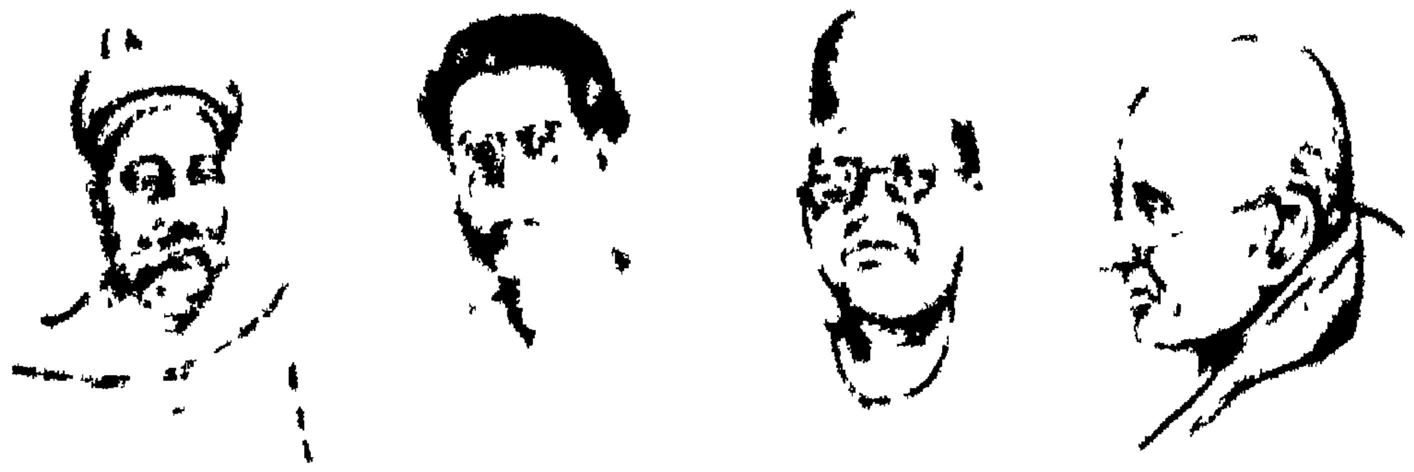

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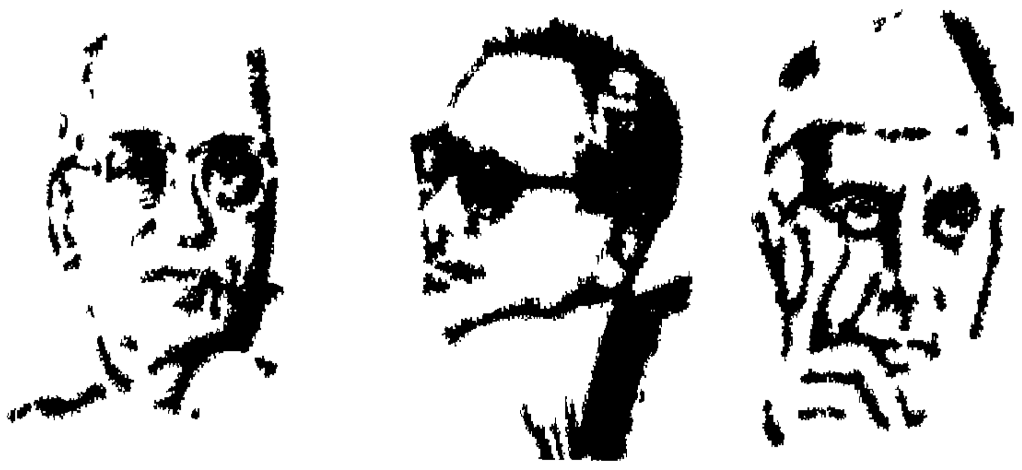

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

(POLITICAL THINKERS OF MODERN INDIA—8)

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PREFACE

Jayaprakash Narayan was born on 11 October 1902 in a lower middle-class family in the village of Sitabdiara situated besides the confluence of the river Ghaghra and the Ganga. When he was born this village lay in the Chapra district of Bihar; it now belongs to the Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh. From the very early period of his life he was a serious student and would devote most of his time to studies. When the non-co-operation movement began, Jayaprakash Narayan decided to discontinue his studies in response to the call of Gandhi. Although he had received a university scholarship, he gave it up. The following year he went to the United States for higher studies and remained there for 8 years.

It was in the United States that he first studied Marxism and Socialism. Initially he was a student of Biology at the University of Iowa and later took up the study of economic and political science at the University of Wisconsin Here he came in contact with a socialist professor and a group of radical students. He was also during this period influenced by the writings of M.N. Roy

Fired with the philosophy of Communism he returned to India in 1929, but the Indian Communist Party did not attract him and he was taken into the labour department of the Indian National Congress. When Gandhi gave the call for civil disobedience in 1930, Jayaprakash Narayan plunged headlong into and was arrested by the British Government and sent to Nasik Jail where he found himself in the company of Asoke Mehta, Minoo Masani, M L. Dantwala and other young radicals who like him, were dissatisfied with the 'soft' official policy of the Congress. All these socialists, including Jayaprakash Narayan, on their release in 1933 established the Congress Socialist Party at a Convention in Patna in May, 1934. Jayaprakash was elected its General Secretary.

The starting of the Second World War found Jayaprakash

Narayan and other socialists in India in the 'anti-war' camp. In 1939 he was arrested for a seditious speech in Jamshedpur Finding conditions in the prison unbearable, he led several hundred political prisoners on a hunger strike. The strike lasted for 31 days, aroused the entire country and finally the British rulers had to yield to their demands

In 1942, Jayaprakash Narayan was transferred to Hazaribagh Central Jail in Bihar from where he made a dramatic escape in September of the same year along with five other compatriots. His escape from the Hazaribagh jail become a legend.

In the earlier days of his public life, Jayaprakash Narayan believed in Marxism as the solution of all the problems that afflicted the Indian society. However, after much inner turmoil he realised that Marxism with its materialistic philosophy would not suit the Indian conditions In 1952, Jayaprakash Narayan finally broke with Marxism and changed his faith to Sarvodaya. Jayaprakash Narayan's entire political life can in fact be described as a quest for a revolution which would usher in a socio-political order enshrining the ideals of freedom and equality.

This book is divided in two parts. Part I contain selected articles and speeches of Jayaprakash Narayan. These reflect his philosophy and the struggle to achieve an egalitarian society Part II consists of articles by learned authors assessing the role of Jayaprakash Narayan in the present day Indian society as well as critical survey of his ideas.

This book is a systematic piecing together of articles contributed by scholars and specialists to the various journals of national and international repute. My special thanks are due to the *Voluntary Action, Janata, Sarvodaya, Harijan, Indian Express, Radical Humanist, Everyman's India Quarterly, Hindustan Times, The Statesman, Political Science Review, Gandhi Vigyan, News of the Christian World, The Observer, Bhoodan, New Leader, Asian Review, Socialist Commentary, Indian Journal of Public Administration* and *International Relations Quarterly* from which I have drawn freely. I express my deep sense of appreciation to all the contributors for their scholarly papers and gratitude to the various librarians and eminent scholars in the field who extended their co-operation to me.

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PART I

I

THE FOUNDATION OF SOCIALISM

JAYPRAKASH NARAYAN

It is often remarked, and not always by the uninformed, that there are so many types of socialism that it is difficult to tell what is meant by the term.

It is true that there have been, historically, diffierent schools of socialism and mutually conflicting socialist parties. But, I think it would not be wrong to say that in recent years, especially owing to the impact of the world crisis and the rise of fascism, there has been a growing unity in socialist thought; and today more than ever before it is possible to say that there is only one type, one theory of socialism—Marxism.

It should be remembered, moreover, that the greater part of the differences between various groups of socialists was, and is, based not on the nature and definition of socialism, but on the method and tactics of changing the present capitalist society into a socialist one. So far only communists have vindicated their theory of tactics by their great and remarkable success in Russia. The proponents of the other methods are today everywhere in the trough of failure.

I am not concerned here with questions of tactics. My object is simply to explain the basic principle of socialism, the domain of which is too extensive to be covered in a short chapter of a book of this nature. I shall be satisfied if I am able to impress on the reader's mind just the principle on which, as a foundation, the edifice of socialism must be raised.

The first thing to remember about socialism is that it is a system of social reconstruction It is not a code of personal conduct; it is not something which you and I can practise. Nor is it a hot-house growth When we speak of applying socialism to India, we mean the reorganization of the whole economic and social life of the country : its farms, factories, schools, theatres. No doubt, it is possible to run the life of a single village or the business of a single factory on socialist lines. But, that would not be socialism The picture cast by a prism on the laboratory wall has seven colours, but it is not the rainbow of the skies

It follows, therefore, that those who desire to construct a socialist society have the power and the requisite sanction behind them to do so No group of idealists can build up socialism unless it has power in its hands.

What is meant by power ? If one looks at the world of today, one finds that the instrument through which groups, parties, individuals attempt to enforce their plans, their schemes, over the community, the nation, is the State Whether it is a constitutionalist party like the Labour Party of England, a revolutionary party like the Bolshevik Party of Russia, fascist party like that of Hitler in Germany, it seeks in every case to capture the State. When the State is in your hands, you can legislate you can use the whole magnificent apparatus of propaganda and education that modern science has made available; you can enforce your will. And, if there is resistance, you can use the coercive arm of the State—the police and the army—to crush it Behind every piece of legislation lies the State's power to persuade and, ultimately, to coerce.

No party in the world of today can build up socialism unless it has the machinery of the State in its hands : whether it has come to acquire it through the will of the electorate or by a *coup d'etat* irrelevant to our discussion just now

As a corollary to this, we can state another proposition : a party in power, i e., in possession of the State, can always establish socialism, provided it has either of two things : sufficient powers of coercion to put down resistance or sufficient popular support to be able to deal with opposition. Both in the end mean the same thing. The coercive powers of a socialist State, if they exist at all, are bound to be derived from popular support—the 'unpopular' support, that is the support of the classes of property, being rather

thrown on the opposite side.

I have said that a party in possession of the State and with the means to keep itself there, can, if it so desired, create a socialist heaven on the earth. What exactly must it do to begin doing this ? Must it haul up all the 'exploiters' and pot-bellied capitalists and have them shot ? Must Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru supposing he became the premier or president of socialist India, line up the taluqdars of the U P. and have them blown up to bits ? Must he seize the treasures of the rajas and the maharajahs and distirbute them to the people—equally, of course ? Must he turn over the Tata Iron Works, for instance, to the workers employed there, and leave them to make as good or bad a business of it as they please ? Must he split up all the land in the country, divide the total acreage by the total population, and hand over a little plot to each individual ? Will that be socialism ?

No, Socialism is something more sensible, more scientific, more civilized than all that

What, then, must Pandit Jawaharlal do ?

We can find the answer to this question, if we take a look at the society we live in—here and abroad.

The first thing that strikes up is the strange and painful fact of inequalities—inequality of rank, of culture, of opportunity : a most disconcertingly unequal distribution of the good things of life. Poverty, hunger, filth, disease, ignorance—for the overwhelming many Comfort, luxury, culture, position, power—for the select few. In our country as much as anywhere else, perhaps more here than elsewere Where, indeed, will you find such contrasts of wealth and poverty, of despotism and degradation as in unhappy India ?

This fact of inequalities with all its brood of social consequences, is the central problem of our society. It is to the solution of this problem that have been directed the best efforts of the best of men in all ages, in our age more than in any other. Charity, philanthropy, utopias, appeals to the more fortunate to be kind to the less fortunate, denunciation of the rich and exaltation of poverty, curtailment of wants—these have been the common reactions to this evil of inequalities.

The socialist's reaction is very diffierent from these. His approach to this problem is like of the physician to disease He

seeks to discover the root cause of the malady. He does not take the fact of inequalities for granted and then proceed to level them up He endeavours rather to tackle the problem at the source so as to check the very growth of inequalities.

In tracing the source of this evil, the socialist first of all encounters the biologist. He is told that human beings are not born equal, as the democrat loves to repeat, but very much unequal From birth we are said to differ in innate capacity—both in quantity and quality. This of course is true and undeniable. Even a behaviourist will have no difficulty in admitting the biologist's claim.

But let us see how this fact of biological inequalities affects the socialist's examination of social inequalities. He admits that the normal bell-shaped curve of probabilities applies as much to human abilities as to any other phenomenon In society there is at one end a small group of geniuses and at the other an equally small group of half-wits and idiots, while in the centre is the vast majority of humanity with more or less equal capabilities.

These biological differences appear in numerous social forms. We get, for example, inequalities in learning and achievements in the arts and sciences. Then, we have inequalities of rank, of wealth, of power, of opportunity. Now, the socialist's protest never was against the fact that Tagores and Ramans exist in society If anything, he is glad that they do exist. He regrets, however, that hundreds of potential Tagores and Ramans go unknown to the grave owing to the fact that they are denied opportunities for self-development. The evil of inequalities was never said to lie, either by socialists or others, in the fact that only a few are gifted by nature to become great poets and scientists The socialist's plea is that the evil lies in the inequalities of the second set enumerated above, viz., inequalities of rank, wealth, etc In our modern world, where property has become a universal social sanction, it is the unequal distribution of property that is the core of the social problem

Wherefore, then, this unequal distribution of wealth ? It may be suggested that here too biology does the trick. The clever ones among us make better businessmen and therefore grow richer than the others. Supposing we grant this for the moment, does it explain the wealth of those who came to acquire it by inheritance ? In the case of inherited wealth, it is obvious, of course, that biological

qualities play no part at all. The idiotic heir of a millionaire would just as well inherit the millions of his ancestor as he would if he were a genius. Here it is obvious that it is merely the existence of a social standard, custom, that is responsible for the fortunes of heirs. Change that custom, and millions of people who are wealthy today would suddenly grow poor.

But let us take the case of those who have made their own fortunes. Have they not done so because of their superior ability ?

That to be a successful businessman a certain type and degree of ability is required, cannot be denied. But, would it not be rather strange that divine dispensation should have ordained that only one type of human ability should be productive of wealth, while all others should acquire wealth only at the will of the wealthy ? A great mathematician may be the greatest of his time but his researches, while they bring him immortality perhaps, do not in themselves mean wealth for him. Has not his genius even as much value as that of an ordinary businessman who makes money by following certain set rules of the game ? A scientist, no matter how clever, does not make any money from his laboratory, unless of course, he turns a businessman. The businessman's laboratory alone seems to be productive of wealth.

Let us see what this laboratory is and how wealth is created and accumulated.

In the world we have men on one side and nature on the other. All wealth is in the womb of nature. Man must work upon nature in order to appropriate from it what he wants. All things of use which he does appropriate constitute his wealth. Thus, the source of wealth is nature and the agency which creates it is human labour. This is the rock bottom of all economics.

How does wealth accumulate ? It is obvious that if men appropriated from nature just as much as was required for their bare existence, nothing would be left for accumulated. The amount of wealth that man can extract from nature depends upon his productive power, i e., the nature of his tools and his methods of work For accumulation to be physically possible, therefore, the productive powers of man should be so advanced that he may be able to produce more than he needs for his subsistence. This is the fundamental basis of accumulation. When the arts of hunting, fishing, planting, have advanced enough to yield more than is necessary for the lowest existence, accumulation becomes possible.

Now, in a society in which the arts of production have advanced beyond the subsistence level, each member would be able to accumulate a certain amount of wealth, provided he was free to work for himself, owned his own tools, had free access to nature and was able to keep all he produced for himself. The maximum rate of accumulation would depend upon the difference between maximum individual production and minimum individual consumption. It might very well happen that some families instead of consuming the minimum used up all they produced. These will not be able to accumulate anything.

In this society there may also be some others who are exceptionally intelligent. They may naturally produce a little more than the rest and, if they are thrifty too, they might save comparatively more. On the other hand, people of inferior intelligence might save very little or nothing at all. But, in every case, in such a society, every able-bodied person would be able to accumulate wealth or, at least, support himself, if, to repeat the provisos stated above, he is free to work for himself, owns his tools, has free access to nature and is the master of all that he produces

Let us turn from this hypothetical society to our own We find that the methods of production—both agricultural and industrial—are so advanced that a man can easily produce much more than he can consume, even at the present standard of living, which is naturally higher than the primitive stage of our hypothetical society. The Indian cultivator, in spite of his comparatively old-fashioned methods and tools, can produce much more than is necessary for him to live on. Yet, we find that millions of our people do not get even a square meal a day. At the same time we also find that there are many people who have not only got their wants satisfied, but who are also enjoying a high degree of comfort. How have these conditions of dire want on one side and ease and luxury on the other been created ?

Let us take the case of the poor first. Considering the advanced productive powers of our present society, it should have been possible for every Indian not only to support himself but also to accumulate something. But, as a matter of fact, most Indians are not supporting themselves. Why ? Because, the provisos which were mentioned above have nearly all disappeared. The people do not all work for themselves; they no longer have free access to nature; in many cases they are not the masters of their tools; they

are not able to keep all they produce for themselves. How all this has come about would be too long a story to tell. That the fact is true, all of us can see

The poverty of our people, then, is due to the fact that the means of production, i e., tools, materials, land, etc. are no longer in their hands They have to pay for most of them, and the more they pay for them the less their own share of the produce and the greater their poverty. A large proportion of them has not even the means to pay for them; there is nothing that they can do except to sell their labour to others. If the means of production were freely available to each individual, there would be no poverty, unless the population rose to such an extent that at the present stage of the productive powers the means of production were unable to produce sufficient wealth to meet the needs of the people. This certainly is not the case in India yet, in spite of its large population

Now, let us take the case of the rich. How is it that some have come to acquire thousands and lakhs of times as much wealth as the poor? An individual, no matter how clever, cannot possibly produce, at any stage of productivity, thousands of times more than others who are using the same means of production. The great riches of the rich are not obviously of other own production It is impossible for such disproportion in the productivity of men, living in the same society, to exist. We have pointed out above that there is no other way of creating wealth except by working upon nature, and that the only way of accumulating wealth is by producing more than one consumes. The limits to production are set by the stage of development the arts of production have reached in society. This is true even in the complicated societies of the West, where production is so mechanized. There we find, as we do here too though not to the same extent, that the means of production, particularly of industrial production, have developed so much that they cannot be used any more be individuals working independently But this in no way invalidates my argument If all the people participating in production took their share of what they produced, the situation would still by the same as in our hypothetical society. Each member of society would accumulate a fair amount of wealth and there would be on poverty nor concentration of too much wealth

in a few hands

How then, have the great fortunes of present society been made ? It may be urged that they are the result of patient saving by industrious people. The answer is that thrift and industry have not been known to travel for generations in the same family line, nor in themselves have they been found to result in excessive wealth. None of the fortunes of today, especially those founded on industry, has a hoary ancestry. The secret of wealth does not lie in the peculiar talents or blood of the wealthy.

Our analysis of the process of accumulation furnishes the secret. Suppose that in a society in which production has passed the subsistence level, an individual manages to employ, say, ten other individuals to work for him and pays them only what they require for their subsistence and keeps the surplus for himself. That individual would be accumulating wealth ten times as fast as others who are working for themselves; and he would soon become a very wealthy man. It should be obvious that the volume of his private wealth would increase with the number of individuals he employs.

Suppose again that in the same society another individual came some-how to establish a monopoly over some part of nature, say, land. By virtue of that monopoly he does not allow anyone to work upon that land, i.e., to cultivate it, unless a share of the produce is vouchsafed him. He too will begin to grow richer than the rest, and his riches will grow in proportion to the land he 'owns' and the tribute he exacts from those who till his land. Likewise with other natural resources.

This is the true secret of the inequality of wealth and the true meaning of exploitation.

The question may be asked here, why should any individual work for any one else and be thus cheated out of part of his produce when he could easily work for himself and keep the whole of it to himself ? A full treatment of this question will involve a survey of the entire social and political history of mankind. Briefly, the answer is that there is no reason why anyone should do it and that, as a matter of fact in history no one has done it except under compulsion.

In all human societies where the open frontier existed so that any one could clear the jungle and cultivate his own plot, no one worked for another, except for mutual benefit. The gifts of nature,

however, were the first to become the monopoly of the few. This monopoly in the earliest days was based on sheer naked force. A group of people arose practically everywhere who established an exclusive ownership over nature, particularly over land, and subjugated others to slavery or serfdom, or to the status of just 'free' rent payers.

In industry, as long as the latter remained at a level where independent individual production was possible, industrial exploitation and therefore differences in industrial incomes, were slow to arise. As, however, production advanced and cities grew, slaves or even individual craftsmen were made to work together for a master, thus creating inequalities in industrial incomes also. The real and rapid growth of industrial fortunes dates, however. from the time steam power (the Industrial Revolution) came into being, making possible a much larger employment, i.e, exploitation, of workers.

It may be urged that there are in society classes of men who neither employ labour nor receive rent or any other tribute, but who nevertheless are quite rich—richer in some cases than the men of the other two classes. For instance, there are traders, speculators, bankers, etc. These neither produce wealth themselves nor do they directly exploit the labour of others engaged in producing wealth Whatever may be the immediate source of the wealth of these classes, this much at least should be clear that it too must come somehow from the total wealth created in the community.

Wealth, as we showed, is created by labour and except that portion of it which goes to the producers, it becomes the property of the employing and exploiting classes. But these classes naturally cannot use themselves all the things that their workers have created. These must be sold and other things bought. Thus, traders and speculators come into being and because goods must be sold in order to enable the manufacturers to buy materials for further manufacture and sale, the latter yield, both as buyers and sellers, some part of the surplus wealth that has fallen into their hands to the traders and speculators Likewise with bankers. They are said to earn interest on the money they lend. But, the interest is created in the process of manufacture and is paid out of the same fund of surplus wealth. Profits, interests, middlemen's commissions—all these come from the same common fund : the

fund created by the surplus wealth appropriated by manufacturers and those who possess a monopoly in the means of production Money in itself cannot make money, nor can any sort of financial and commercial manipulation do so The whole game of capitalist business consists in the attempt of the various parts of it to appropriate as large a share of the surplus wealth as possible. Herein lies the secret of all capitalist competition and all the subtle and complicated business practices that are so laboriously taught in the universities !

To repeat, for it will bear repetition, it is the wealth that accumulates in the hands of those who own the means of production, by virtue of their exploitation of other's labour, that constitutes the general fund from which, as a result of the working of the economic organization, other groups draw their share It is wrong to believe that these 'middlemen' in any manner 'create' wealth. Their 'money-making' merely means diverting as great a share of the total accumulated wealth as possible in their own direction. Even the professions—lawyers, physicians, etc —fill their ladles from this same common bowl, though in their case, part of their share comes from that portion of the total wealth also that goes the actual producers—the workers, peasants, etc

To sum up, the root cause of inequalities of wealth lies in the fact that the gifts of nature, which yield wealth to men, and the instruments of production, have come to be privately owned by people for their own benefit. This leads to economic exploitation, i.e , the withholding from the workers of all that they produce except what they need to live on at a given standard of living. This takes place either directly, as when labourers are employed to produce goods for the manufacturer, or indirectly, as when men rent land, or any other natural resource, for their livelihood.

The earliest manner in which these sources and instruments (collectively termed 'means' in socialist writings) of production passed into private hands was through force. This is termed 'primitive accumulation'. The surplus wealth thus accumulated in the hands of those who were able to use force went on multiplying through the ages through the institution of slavery and indentured labour, till the loot from India and the inventions of certain German-Englishmen combined to usher in the Industrial Revolution. This became par excellence the age of exploitation, because it made the employment of vast masses of labourers possible in a

the removal of the basic course of the present society. The source of accumulation of wealth in private hands is the exploitation of labour, as we saw above, With social ownership established, people no longer work for others. They work for themselves, not individually but collectively; and what they produce is not for the profit of the manufacturer, but for their own consumption. Social ownership means that all wealth is held in common and shared equitably, the basis of distribution being, initially, the amount and character of work done and, finally, the needs of the individual; only that part of the produce being withheld from distribution which is necessary for defence and administration, for schools and hospitals, for economic development, and for other common purposes.

Here, then, is the basic principle of socialism—socialization of the means of production. Any attempt at a socialist reconstruction of society must start with the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production.

For a young State launching upon socialism, it may not be possible to accomplish this at one stroke. However, if it is to succeed in its purpose, it must effect this change immediately in all those spheres of large-scale production which dominate the economic life of the country and hold the key positions.

In developed communities, side by side with the means of production, means of exchange and distribution also rise—banks, commercial institutions, transport, etc. The latter issue out of and support the former. Their purpose is to keep the wheels of production turning. Socialization of the former therefore must also be accompanied by socialization of the latter.

We are now perhaps in a position to say what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru would do, if he came to power.

2

MY PICTURE OF SOCIALISM

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

No intelligent person today will doubt that the next stage in the evolution of human society is socialism. But will there be a like agreement on the question, what is socialism ? Different theories of socialism and different pictures of a socialist society have been presented from time to time by socialist thinkers and workers. These differences are reduced somewhat when one takes into consideration only one of the several broad schools of socialist thought. Thus, if we accept Marxism, or belong to the Marxist School, as I do, the differences are greatly narrowed down, but they are by no means removed or obliterated. There are socialist movements in the world today professing allegiance to Marx that widely differ among themselves, even quarrel and fight with one another. The Stalinists and Trotskyists, for instance, both profess to march under the banner of Marxism, but they not only differ from each other, but even thirst for each other's blood. Which of these two 'Marxist' schools presents a true picture of socialism ? Those who belong to neither of these warning camps would doubtless say, none.

In our own country the Communists and Royists[1] both swear by Marx, but we have seen the kind of 'socialist' policy they have followed in the name of Marx. We have seen that to them Marxism included even working as hirelings of Maxwell[2] and spying on Indian revolutionaries. Moreover, both these 'Marxist' groups are each other's bitter enemies. There are other little groups too in this country flying Marxist colours, but never agreeing among

themselves as to what is Marxism.

It seems to me, therefore, that in view of all this confusion and rival claims, the socialist movement in India must evolve its own picture of socialism in the light of Marxist thought, of world history since Marx's death and of conditions in this country and our historical background Marxism is a science of society and a scientific method of social change that includes social revolution As such there can be no room for dogmatism or fundamentalism in Marxist thought. Those who on the one hand, call Marxism scientific and on the other, introduce dogmatism into it do it great disservice. In science there is no such things as final truth. Science progress by the progressive elimination of untruth from human knowledge. If Marxism is a science, Marx could not have expounded ultimate truths, but only made approximations to them Today with a vastly developed store of human knowledge and vastly greater experience and observation of capitalist society, we are in a position to make far nearer approximations to the truth than Marx. The unending merit of Marx is that he has given us a method to understand and change history, even as Darwin gave us a method of understanding life. Darwinism and Marxism were born almost together, but not even the most ardent Darwinist today believes in the theories of evolution as they were propounded by Darwin. Yet he would proudly call himself a Darwinist. My Professor of biology at Wisconsin ranked *The Origin of the Species* only next to the Bible amongst the world's books, but he never thought for a moment that he was being disloyal to his master when he proceeded to show where modern research had proved Darwin false or only partially true. It is open in the same manner for a Marxist to give not the second but even the first rank to *Capital* and yet seek to develop and refine the partial truths of Marxism.

II

With these introductory remarks let me turn now to the subject in hand. The creation of a socialist society involves two stages : the stage of the transition, and the stage when socialism has been established. It is obvious that the form of the transitional period will be determined by present conditions and final objectives, that is, the final picture of socialism in view.

I shall consider here only the final picture of socialism.

The objectives of socialism are : elimination of exploitation and poverty; provision of equal opportunities to all for self-development; full development of the material and moral resources of society and utilization of these resources in accordance with the needs and wishes of society as a whole rather than in accordance with the needs and wishes of society as a whole rather than in accordance with the dictates of profit; equitable apportionment of national wealth and social, educational and other services between all who labour and serve society.

A system of social organization that serves these ends is a socialist society. Anytihng that does not, is not socialism. No pre-conceived theories, no matter by whom propounded, need detain or confuse us if they do not subserve these ends in practice.

I believe that these ends can be achieved only if certain vital changes are made in the existing society and the economic and political organization of the future society is based on the foundations described below.

First of all, there must be complete political freedom. In other words, India must become an independent nation. There can be no socialism under British rule. This point needs no emphasis.

Second, there should be no privileged economic or political class as at present, i e , a self-perpetuating class wielding economic and political power. In other words, the 'ruling' Princes and the zamindars (not the peasant farmers of the Punjab, but the land-holders of U.P., Bihar and some other provinces) and the capitalists must be made to surrender their economic and political power and privilege.

After the removal of British power, the abolition of Princes and of the zamindari and capitalist systems should be a comparatively simpler problem. If the Indian people proved strong enough to destroy the British Raj in India, nothing could stop them from destroying feudalism and capitalism if they desired to do so. The only limiting factor would be the stage of development of the political consciousness of the masses. In other words, if the socialist movement were to become strong enough to move the masses in the right direction, all these changes could be made without much difficulty or opposition.

The abolition of princedom hardly raises any technical

problem for socialism to solve. Bourgeois society has the solution ready at hand, and we could draw upon the history of bourgeois revolutions. The Princes will only have to be removed from their *gadis* and reduced to the status of the ordinary citizen, and their States made part of regions scientifically determined with due regard to geography, economic resources and cultural affinities.

Abolition of the zamindari system is also only the first step in a socialist reorganization of our agrarian economy which indeed involves rather difficult questions of theory and practice By merely saying that there will be no zamindars in socialist India, we say practically nothing as to the real form of socialist agriculture we wish to develop in this country. I shall describe below the main outlines of our socialized agricultural economy as I visualize it.

Abolition of capitalism is undoubtedly a great step forward towards socialism, but by itself it can hardly be called socialism. It is merely a negative half of which the positive half has yet to be created. In what manner capitalism will be abolished and what will take its place will determine to a large extent the kind of socialism that we are going to have. I shall try to give below the picture I have in mind of socialist industry in this country.

To a consideration of agriculture and industry I shall have to add a few words about banking and trade. That would give us a fair picture of socialist economy. The political half of my picture of socialist India would then remain to be drawn up. I shall first deal with the economic part of my picture.

III

The land systems in this country are complicated beyond description, but they all agree more or less in exploiting the tiller of the soil in the interest of a small landed and moneyed class. All these systems have to be scrapped completely and a new system created in their place. In building up socialist agriculture, we will have to pass through two stages—the co-operative and collective stages.

After the abolition of zamindari, there will be a redistribution of land with a view to breaking up big holdings and making the smaller holdings economic. No peasant would have more than a certain maximum acreage of land, let us say, thirty acres, and none

less than five. No one shall be allowed to own land who does not reside in the village and actually till his land. The unit of agricultural economy would be the village. The legal ownership of land would rest with the village, as a whole, and the village *panchayat* would have the power, according to laws made by the State, to settle its lands on individual peasants. Thus, the peasant will have a sort of proprietary right over the land settled with them. Present proprietary rights will be respected except where it is found necessary to alter them in order to bring about a fairer redistribution of land and remove gross inequalities at both ends. The proprietary right would be restricted merely to the right of the peasant to receive from the produce of the village lands his share in accordance with the size of his holding. No peasant will be allowed to sell land to anyone except to the *gram panchayat*. Peasants will not be allowed to carry on cultivation and other farming operations separately. Each *gram panchayat*, among other things, will also function as a farmers' co-operative. The co-operative will conduct all farming operations including buying, selling and borrowing. All who labour in the fields will receive wages in kind or money according to the wage laws of the State and the produce will be distributed after deducting costs according to the size of holdings.

This is the co-operative stage of socialist farming. The next stage is the collective stage in which no individual proprietary rights in agricultural lands (in Russia each collective farmer is allowed to own privately up to three acres of land around his homestead for kitchen gardening, raising poultry or other similar purposes) are recognized and all lands pertaining to a village, or farming unit, are owned and run by village collectives. In Russia collectivization was pushed through at great human cost and under a ruthless dictatorship. Estimates run up to as high a figure as twenty millions of those who had to be 'liquidated' in order to make collectivization a success I do not favour such a colossal repression of the toiling peasant masses, nor does socialist theory permit it. Abolition of landlordism, redistribution of land and breaking up of big holdings would require State coercion to be used against fifteen to twenty per cent of the agricultural population perhaps. But collectivization might require sixty to seventy per cent of that population to be repressed. I do not find any justification for any political party, speaking and acting in the

name of the toiling masses, to indulge in such wholesale repression. Twenty per cent may be coerced in the interest of the remaining eighty per cent, but there is no justification for repressing seventy per cent of the peasants even 'for their own good'. Co-operative farming itself would require a good measure of coercion But in that case a wise mixture of coercion and persuasion, as also concession of certain economic advantages, might be, and I am sure will be, found to be sufficient. Collectivization on the other hand would require a degree of wholesale repression that is repugnant to socialism, which above all is the expression of the will of the toiling masses Therefore, collectivization will follow as the second stage and its pace would be necessarily slower and adjusted to the results of propaganda and demonstration. I need not, however, emphasise that new agricultural colonies and settlements need not pass from the co-operative to the collective stage. They can and will be put on a collective basis from the start

Conversion of peasant agricultural economy into the sort of co-operative economy described above would result in a considerable part of the present agricultural population being thrown out of employment. Place will have to be found for this surplus agrarian population in industry, particularly in industries subsidiary to farming.

We turn now to a consideration of socialist industry. I visualize two types of industries in a socialist India, large scale and small scale. It goes without saying that both large and small industries together with agriculture will form parts of a balanced national economy, democratically managed and controlled.

All large industries would be owned and managed by the Federal or Provincial Governments. Representatives of trade unions would have an appropriate voice in the management from the lowest to the highest levels.

I visualize all small industries to be organized into producers' co-operatives, who would own and manage their industries. Apart from passing legislation for the regulation of these co-operatives, the State will not interfere with their work. These industries will include subsidiary agricultural industries as well as existing and new handicrafts.

I visualize and advocate another type of industrial ownership apart from State ownership and Producers, Co-operatives, that is, municipal or community ownership. A township or a city may

own and manage, if not large, middling and small industries. The representatives of the workers in these community-owned industries would naturally have an adequate voice in their management.

I advocate development of these co-operatives and community-owned industries, firstly, because I do not believe it is possible to find employment for many years to come for our surplus population, which would swell further at least by twenty per cent by the revolution in agriculture, in large industry alone; secondly, because I desire to prevent the State from acquiring the sole monopoly in industry and employment The State under socialism threatens, as in Russia, far from withering away, to become an all-powerful tyrant maintaining a stranglehold over the entire body of citizens. This leads to totalitarianism of the type we witness in Russia today. By dispersing the ownership and management of industry and by developing the villages into democratic village republics, we break this stranglehold to a very large extent and attenuate the danger of totalitarianism

In the field of trade I have the following picture in mind. Foreign trade will be entirely in the hands of the State. Internal trade will be shared between the State, the local community and the co-operatives All banking will be in the hands of the State.

Here then is the economic picture of my Socialist India: co-operative farming run by gram panchayats; collective farms in new settlements; large-scale industry owned and managed by the State, community-owned and managed industry; and small industry organized into producers' co-operatives.

IV

I come now to the political part of my picture

The State in socialist India must be a fully democratic State There can be no socialism without democracy It is a common mistake these days to think that there must be the dictatorship of the proletariat in a socialist State. This is against the teaching of Marx. The dictatorship of the proletariat has a place only in the transitional period from capitalism to socialism And in this period too, it is not inevitable in every case. Marx visualized a capitalist State, such as England, where political democracy was in full vogue and there was no large standing army, where democratic

processes could be used to bring about socialism But apart from such rare cases, dictatorship of the proletariat has been considered in Marxian thought as essential for the transitional period It is, however, the very essence of Marxism that once the transition is over, the State must become a fully democratic institution When the old ruling classes have been destroyed and society has been converted entirely into a society of workers, it is idiotic to talk of a dictatorship of the proletariat because the proletariat cannot dictate over itself.

Let me stop here to say a word further about the dictatorship of the proletariat. Whether our transition in India from present society to socialism takes the democratic or dictatorial form - I personally think it would take the democratic form—it should be remembered that dictatorship of the proletariat in Marxist theory does not mean the dictatorship of a single party, such as the Communist Party in Russia. It means the dictatorship of a class, the working class; or in industrially-backward countries such as India and post-Czarist Russia, of a combination of the toiling classes, such as workers, peasants and the lower middle class. These classes may have one or more political parties and these parties must all be united in the dictatorship or have freedom to function freely under the dictatorship. The dictatorship of the proletariat never meant that parties of the working class or other toilers would be suppressed; it meant only the suppressions of the ruling classes and their political and economic institutions.

Coming back to the question of democracy under socialism, it is necessary to explain in some detail what this democracy should mean concretely. First of all, it should mean that there might be more than one political party of the working people, and that the workers, the industrial and peasant co-operatives, the trade unions, etc. might from different political parties and that these parties should function freely. It should mean that there should be full freedom for expression of opinion and to form voluntary organizations for political purposes. The trade unions, the local communities, the co-operatives and other such corporate bodies of the working people might have their own newspapers and broadcasting systems, conduct their own publicity and propaganda and even run their own schools and educational institutions.

Democracy under socialism should further mean that the trade unions should not be limbs of the State and subservient to it, but

ndependent bodies supporting the State, and also exercising a check over the government of the day. In Russia the trade unions have no independence whatever and have been subjected to the will of the State on the theory that the State being a workers' state all workers' organizations must be subject to it. Here the State and government have been confused. A particular State may be a workers' State, but the government of the day might be making mistakes and wilfully or unwilfully acting contrary to the workers' nterests In that case there must be independent organs of the working class, such as trade unions—and in a socialist society the rade unions will be second in importance only to the government tself—in a position to check or correct or change the government n power.

V

Thus, my picture of a socialist India is the picture of an economic and political democracy In this democracy man will neither be slave to capitalism nor to a party or the State. Man will be free. He will have to serve society which will provide him with employment and the means of livelihood, but within limits he will be free to choose his avocation and station in life. He will be free to express his opinions and there will be opportunities for him to rise to his full moral stature. There will be no great difference between man and man—except the difference of physical and mental endowments—for there will be no great difference in ncomes.

Notes and References

1 Followers of M.N. Roy
2. Home Member of the Government of India during the '42 struggle.

3

THE TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

A socialist India, it should be clear, cannot spring up overnight from the womb of history. A period of gestation, a transitional period from the India of today to the future must intervene. This period may be long or short depending upon internal and external circumstances and the wisdom or unwisdom of socialist policies. But a period of transition there must be.

In my last article[1] I had written : "It is obvious that the form of the transitional period will be determined by present conditions and final objectives, that is, the final picture of socialism in view." That picture is now before us. It was necessary to depict that picture first, because we can choose our path only when we know where we are going. Well, the goal is before us : so is the starting point, i.e., the present situation in the country. Which is the path that leads from here to that final-goal ? Have we a choice; are there many paths from which we may choose ? I believe there is only one correct path; any other will lead us not to the objectives we already have in view, but to other goals. Therefore, we must be extra careful in choosing our way to socialism.

Perhaps, we may enquire first what help we get from Marx in making the choice. At the Hague Convention of the First International in 1872, Marx, speaking on tactics, made the following remarks : 'The worker must one day capture political power in order to found the new organization of labour . . But we do not assert that the way to reach this goal is the same everywhere We know that the institutions, the manners and the customs of the

various countries must be considered, and we do not deny that there are countries like England and America, and if I understood your arrangements better, I might even add Holland, where the worker may attain his object by peaceful means. But not in all countries is this case.' Marx here plainly conceives of two ways to socialism, one peaceful, the other violent. Which of the two ways must be adopted depends on the conditions in each country. In Russia there was no democracy, so Lenin took the path of violent revolution, though it may be doubtful today how far Lenin was justified in disbanding the Constituent Assembly when he had no majority in it. There is democracy in England, and its scope has developed greatly since Marx's days. Accordingly, we find British Labour installed in government by a democratic process and putting socialist schemes into practice in a democratic fashion. Not even the blindest fanatic would dream of the possibility or necessity of a violent revolution in Great Britain today.

In India there is no democrary, and Indian society is far from being democratic. There is no democracy because there is British rule, which exists not by the force of democratic sanctions, but by virtue of its armed might. Indian society, with its princes and nawabs, its landlords, its higher and lower castes and its untouchables is wholly undemocratic both in spirit and fact.

For the past many years India has been struggling to achieve a free democracy. As everyone knows, the Indian National Congress has been the main instrument of this struggle. Its efforts have brought the country very near to success, but a great deal of further effort has yet to be made Our path to socialism will very largely be determined by the outcome of these efforts. It is not yet clear what the outcome is going to be In any case, we are not spectators in this process, but active participants exerting our utmost to shape and influence that outcome

The problem of the transition to socialism has tow parts at the present juncture. The first part is concerned with the achievement of a free Indian democracy and the second with the transformation of that democracy into a socialist democracy

Let me deal with the second part first. Let us assume that a full democratic States has been established in India. In such a democracy, if we go by historical parallels and the prognostications of Marx and Lenin, the bourgeois class would come at the top. How could the working class and the city and rural poor

displace the bourgeoisie and establish socialism." Through the democratic process or a violent revolution ?

Speaking for myself, I would choose the democratic method. Remember the goal I have laid down is that of democratic socialism. The method of violent revolution and dictatorship might conceivably lead to a socialist democracy; but in the only country, U.S.S.R., where it has been tried, it has led to something very different, i e., to a bureaucratic State, in which democracy does not exist. I should like to take a lesson from history. If the socialist movement in India had no freedom to use the democratic method, there could be only one way of destroying bourgeois society and bourgeois rule, that is to say, the way of violent revolution and dictatorship. But I have assumed that a full democratic State will come into being.

We have seen that Marx, as early as 1872, when political democracy had not yet risen to its full height, visualized a peaceful transition to socialism. If we were to take into consideration, as it is our duty to do as Marxists, all the social changes that have taken place since then, we would be strengthened in Marx's view. Political democracy has become far more democratic today than in Marx's time and the economic, political and ideological forces of capitalism have been completely shattered on the European continent and become much weaker in Great Britain. The power of socialism and labour is generally on the ascendant in large sectors of the globe and democratic socialist parties are in the seats of power in many countries. Even communist parties, though they do not believe in democracy, are found working today through demcoratic instruments, and at least in words eschewing distatorship. The Communist Party of France, even though the largest party in the country, participated in the Constituent Assembly and is now working a democratic constitution.

In our own country, the capitalist class, even when sitting at the top in a democratic State, as we have assumed, will not have the strength of the British or American capitalist class. It will be far weaker. Furthermore, it would be impossible to solve the economic problems of the country within the framework of capitalism. This will strengthen the forces working for socialism. There will be yet another factor working in the same direction. The forces gathered today in the fold of the national movement represent various sectors of the people, but overwhelmingly they represent

the peasant masses and the urban middle class. This would be true if we took not only the leadership of the movement but the movement as a whole When I assumed the capitalist class to have come on top, I assumed too that it could do so only by riding on the wave of nationalism Apart from the fact, whether this would be possible or not, such a leadership, or success in so exploiting the national forces, would invest that class with certain responsibilities which it could not discharge consistently with its interests. The resulting disillusionment could only further strengthen the forces socialism. Capitalism when it was a growing force in the world found it possible to assume the role of national leadership. The decadent capitalism of today cannot play this part any more.

The conclusion to which all this leads me is that in a fully democratic India the transition to socialism can be and should be a peaceful democratic process That is to say, the future Socialist Party of India into which the present C.S.P. must evolve, should, by a victory at the polls, take over the government and the legislature and use them in accordance with law to destroy capitalism and create socialism.

Let me turn now to the problem of creating a fully democratic India. I have said above that the fight for democracy, which has been waged these many years under the leadership of the Congress, is very near success today. But, the imperial power together with its main supports, namely the Muslim League and the Princely Order, stands even now pretty solidly in our way. The soothing talk that the British have made up their minds to quit is calculated merely to deceive the people and quieten their fears, the fears being that insted of eliminating the obstacles in our path we might compromise with them and thus jeopardize freedom and democracy. Indian democracy built on the foundation of that compromise cannot be full democracy, the kind of democracy I assumed above, a democracy that would offer the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism

British rule is undemocratic, princely rule is undemocratic, communalism is undemocratic. All these three are ranged against us today. They make a powerful combination. How can we conquer these forces of reaction ? Surely not by giving in to them, surely not by making concessions Our nationalist leadeship believes today that by making a compromise with these forces it would be possible to acquire so much political power as to be able later to

destroy the enemies of democracy But, it is forgotten that the political power so acquired will not be held exclusively by the forces of nationalism and democracy but also jointly by the forces of reaction. Having got into power these forces will be strengthened rather than weakened. Recent history shows that every concession hitherto made to communalism has only made it stronger till it has become the present Frankenstein There is no reason to believe that concessions made in the future will produce a contrary result. Rather, the danger is that concessions made with regard to the basic principles of our national life would result in such a sickly and diseased India that life for her would hardly be worth living. Only a major revolution could then bring her back to healthy life.

What then is the way to defeat the forces of reaction and the enemies of democracy ranged against us ? The only way is to renew the demand of 'Quit India' and to mobilize the people into a final challenge with the foreign power It is that power which is our primary enemy and which instigates and supports the reactionary forces in this country It is that power which has to be destroyed first. It is likely that faced with a final challenge to its existence that power would attempt to rally its reactionary allies, but this danger has to be met. Even today when a policy of conciliation is being followed the same game is being played and every effort is being made to thwart the forces of freedom and democracy In the present circumstances these efforts are succeeding to a degree where freedom and democracy are not only gravely imperilled but are being denied. It is my firm conviction that in the course of a direct struggle these efforts would not succeed to the same degree, if to any degree at all. I believe that in the fire of revolution alone can the edifice of imperialism be burnt down together with the supporting edifices of feudalism and communalism.

In other words, I clearly see a major revolution intervening on our road to socialism. I see further that the success of that revolution depends as much on its social ends. In fact, I do not see that revolution succeeding if only 'Quit India' were inscribed on its banners. Other objectives too its banners must proclaim : 'land to him who tills it'; 'wealth to him who produces it'; 'Praja Raj'[2] in the State' and others. The revolution must mobilize fully the peasants, the workers in the factories, the students, the city poor and the middle classes. Such a revolution will not only lead to the

establishment of full democracy in India, but also take us a considerable way on the road to socialism. Such a revolution will place at the top not the capitalist class, but the toiling and the middle classes. While such a revolution will not destroy capitalism in one stroke it would put it the defensive and start it on a losing race.

The Congress, which has been and remains the spearhead of the national revolution, has been slowly taking note of the economic urges of the people The resolution on social objectives adopted by the Meerut session of the Congress[3] goes a very long way towards socialism The difficulty, however, seems to be that to the dominant section of the Congress, which seems at the bottom to be guided by capitalistic ideas but which exploits the name of Mahatma Gandhi, these declarations of social policy are merely tactical moves to placate the masses in order not to lose their support If we review the work of Congress, Governments in the provinces and at the centre, we shall find, apart from words and resolutions, no concrete proof that the social policy laid down in Congress manifestos and resolutions has any binding or compelling force behind it. Therefore, the course of the transition to socialism would depend to a very large extent on the success of the socialist movement in influencing, not only in words but also in deeds, the national movement. How best can this influence be exercised ? The C.S P. has tried to fulfil this task by working both within and without the Congress. But already the question of a separation between the socialist and nationalist movements has been raised If the possibility of an open conflict which the British were not before us, if the possibility of the Congress being driven willy-nilly into this conflict were not present, if also it were not true that a national struggle could be launched in the near future only under the auspices of the Congress and not in opposition to it. I would not have hesitated to advise that the socialist movement should now part company with the Congress. But today these possibilities and considerations make such a step fraught with danger, even disaster. If, however, it is found that the Congress had forsaken the revolutionary path and was determined, whatever compromises it might have to make, to remain in the offices of Government, we should have come to the parting of ways. Under those conditions the Congress would be bound to pass more and more under the influence of vested interests and its structure to

become more and more rigid and undemocratic, barring the growth of socialist forces within its fold. We have to go forward keeping both these possibilities in view.

Thus, we see that the transition to socialism is not a straight path, but a tangle of conflicting paths. Therefore, it is not possible to be doctrinaire about the policies of this period I have reaffirmed my faith in democratic socialism, which is the only true socialism. I have stated clearly that in a full and untramelled democracy I shall adopt democratic means to achieve socialism. But faced as we are with undemocratic forces which have to be defeated and destroyed before socialism can be ushered in, I conceive a period of trouble and turmoil, a revolutionary phase of the transition, a phase in which not only the democratic revolution should be completed but also considerable progress made towards socialism. A State and society emerging from such a revolution should then be able to pass in a democratic manner into full socialism.

But there may be all manner of upsets in this scheme of development. The coming revolution as visualized may not come at all, and the country may be saddled with as undemocratic rule. Democraitc methods would be of no avail then, and a different sort of revolution might take place, a revolution based on a different alignment of classes and led mainly by the socialist forces in the country which should then be organized independently as the Socialist Party of India. Or again, taking advantage of the turmoiled times ahead, the capitalist, feudal and communal elements might make a bid, in alliance with the right wing of the national movement to establish their dictatorial rule. Democratic means would again be of no avail, and the only alternative would be to counter the reactionary move by establishing a dictatorship of the toiling masses, a dictatorship not of any party or the working class alone, but of the workers, the peasants and the city poor. Other developments would require other tactics, other solutions.

I said at the outset that there was only one correct path to our goal. I have not gainsaid it by what I have just written. There is indeed only one correct path from each given situation; if we followed the same unchanging path in every changing situation we can only end in disaster. What I wrote at the outset was in the context of certain ideal assumptions. It was necessary to do so in order to put my views clearly. But we cannot experiment with

socialism under controlled conditions as a laboratory. Therefore keeping our objective in view and not departing from basic principles, we must be ready to adopt whatever methods and tactics a changing situation might demand. I realize that there are pitfalls and dangers in such a course, but it is better to face these dangers than to lose everything by being rigid and doctrinaire.

Whatever form the transition to socialism might take, I should make in clear in conclusion, that the overall requirements for socialism to be achieved is the existence of a well-organized, powerful socialist party, supported mainly by workers' and peasants' organizations and organizations of the youth (volunteer, student, etc.) and the city poor. From small beginnings, the C.S.P. has reached its present position of strength and influence. The C.S.P. is the party of socialism in this country : the party of the future. Like the country itself the C.S P. too is passing through a transition and it must soon acquire forms that would represent and express the political and economic and social urges of the oppressed masses.

Notes and References

1. My Picture of Socialism
2. People's Government.
3. This session was held in November 1946. The resolution referred to here was moved by Jayaprakash Narayan himself on behalf of the Working Committee of the Congress.
   It declared · 'In the opinion of this Congress Swaraj cannot be real for the masses unless it makes possible the achievement of a society in which democracy extends from the political to the social and eco nomic spheres, and in which there would be no opportuniy for privileged classes to exploit the bulk of the people, nor for gross inequalities such as exist at present, Such a society would ensure individual liberty, equality of opportunity and the fullest scope for every citizen for the development of his personality.'

4

THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIALIST UNITY IN INDIA

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

The last half-a-dozen years, that is, the years since the end of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1934, saw a phenomenal rise of the socialist movement in this country. The history of this rise is largely the history of the Congress Socialist Party.

Before the Party was formed in 1934, soon after the cessation of civil disobedience, socialism could hardly be said to have been in the picture of Indian politics. It had received a certain amount of publicity at the time of the Meerut Conspiracy Case, but it secured no place for itself in the political life of the country, and appeared to the people rather as an article of foreign importation. In 1931, Shri M.N. Roy, when he returned to India secretly, formed a party of his own. But that party too remained practically unknown, and did not as much as create even a little ripple over the surface of Indian politics. The utterances of individual radical nationalist leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, had attracted to a degree the attention of a section of the middle-class intelligentsia. But there was no organized movement worth the name It would be no exaggeration, therefore, to say that it was the Congress Socialist Party that in 1934 put socialism on the political map, and in the six years of its life, continuously enlarged the orbit of its influence.

These last six years of the socialist movement have been as

full of rich experience as they were full of difficulties. We shall deal here only with one of the many problems that faced it. No question was of more interest or greater importance to the socialist movement than what might be described as the question of 'socialist unity'. Today, nothing is of greater importance than to examine the experiences gained regarding this problem, and to draw lessons for future guidance. While the matter is of some interest to the general public also, it is of the utmost importance for members of the Congress Socialist Party. Not only has all the relevant material never been published before but there is also a persistent attempt by enemies of the Party to misrepresent the whole case. It is hoped, therefore, that this pamphlet would be of considerable use to members of the Party and its friends, and serve not only to inform but also to guide them. At the same time it is our hope that it will be found to be of some service also to the public in general.

The phrase 'socialist unity' is at best a vague phrase, Does it mean the unity of all those who call themselves socialists ? And what is the meaning of unity ? Co-operation unity of aim and purpose, or unity of organization ? There are all manner of people who claim to be socialists. There are people among the Liberals who profess socialism. Gandhiji calls himself a socialist. There are others, like the Congress Socialist Party, who consider that the only true socialism is Marxism. The problem that we are considering here is the problem of the coming together in one party of all those groups and individuals who stand by Marxism.

Let us consider how this question presented itself concretely when the Party was formed. Then we shall consider the vicissitudes through which it had to pass and its present position.

At the time the Party was formed, there were two other socialist groups that professed Marxism, and aspired to have an all-India basis. These were the Communist Party and the Roy group. There were also at that time or shortly afterwards certain local Marxist groups, such as the Punjab Socialist Party and the Labour Party (Bengal). From the very beginning the Party desired to bring together all these local and national groups in order to form one united socialist party As would appear from the present position, the Party largely failed in this endeavour. It failed, however, not because it lacked initiative or spared effort, but

because of the sectarianism and disruptiveness of the other parties, particularly of the Communist Party. We shall now turn to the history of this failure.

THE ROY GROUP

We shall first deal with the Roy Group. The Group greeted the formation of the Party with enthusiasm. Some of its members were associated with the Party from its foundation, and the Group as a whole took up an attitude of goodwill and co-operation. The Party in its turn invited members of the Group to join it. In a few months practically the whole Group was within the Congress Socialist Party, and the hope was aroused that at least two of the three Parties were soon to become one. But this was not to be.

Here, we may draw attention to an interesting fact, a fact that would emerge clearly from this narrative as we go along. Our Party, because it grew out of the very heart of the national movement, occupied a very strategic position in it. This led every other party that came along to seek to capture the Congress Socialist Party so as to take advantage of the position it occupied. When this was not possible, it was sought to destroy the Congress Socialist Party as an obstacle to the rise of others. This is what happened in the case of the Royists and the Communist Party.

At the time the Roy Group joined the Party, there was hardly any difference expressed with the basic policies of the Party. But within the next year, i e., some time before the second conference of the Party at Meerut in January 1936, certain differences began to appear. This difference was set forth in a document that said in essence that the Party should not at all be developed as a socialist party but as the left wing of the Congress; it went further and said that the Congress Socialist Party as a socialist party should indeed be liquidated.

Here again we may draw attention to another interesting fact. The basic difficulty in the path of unity was the ridiculous idea held by every miserable little party that it alone was the real Marxist party, and that every other party had therefore, to be exploited, captured or destroyed. The Roy Group was also a votary of this inflated creed. It was natural for it, therefore, to consider the development of another socialist party as unnecessary

and harmful. It was much better to have a left platform which it could animate and dominate. All this was unfortunately not clear to us at the beginning, and we took seriously the professions of unity of these groups and parties. Indeed, the ideal of unity had so far got the better of our judgement and understanding that this did not become sufficiently clear to some of us till the parties concerned themselves tore-off their masks.

When the said Royist document was placed before the National Executive at Meerut, the two Royist members of the Committee repudiated it completely, and supported instead the Thesis of the Party (Known as the Meerut Thesis) that stated clearly that the Party was and must remain a Marxist socialist party. When the matter was taken to the Conference, the Royists were divided. Some voted for the Executive's Thesis, a few produced an amendment which made a veiled attempt to revert to the repudiated document. They were completely routed. After that single instance in which a point of important difference was brougnt to light, the Group worked as if it would soon merge completely with the Party. Difficulties were indeed experienced with them here and there, as in the labour movement in Bombay, but these were not ideological differences.

This situation continued till some time after the release of Shri M.N. Roy from prison towards the end of 1936. To begin with, he was friendly to the Party and even played with the idea of joining it. But soon enouge he began in his public statement to make indirect attacks on the Party and its basic policies. Statements such as 'there should be no party within the Congress', 'abolition of zamindari is a remote issue', 'there should be no organization of the peasantry apart from the Congress committees' (the party had taken a leading role in forming Kisan Sabhas and raising the issue of abolition of landlordism) found frequent place in his public utterances. He, however, allowed his followers who had joined the Congress Socialist Party to continue to remain in it. But not for long. Suddenly, at the time of the Delhi Convention in March 1937, he decided secretly to withdraw his followers from the Congress Socialist Party. Why he did so was never publicly explained. Perhaps he felt the anomaly of the position in which the leader and his followers found themselves in two different camps. He must have found out that the Congress Socialist Party could not become his tool, nor a convenient pedestal for the

eminence he wished to attain. Whatever be the reasons, the fact is that the Royists soon after trooped out of the Congress Socialist Party. While staging their resignations they invariably attacked the Congress Socialist Party for weakening the Congress. After that the main political activity of Shri M.N. Roy and his *Independent India* was to discredit and denounce the Party. They failed to capture it; therefore, they must destory it.

Thus, after more than a year and a half of close co-operation, our Royist friends left us with a parting kick. The entire responsibility for disrupting the measure of unity that had been achieved must be laid at the doors of the Royists, and above all of Shri Roy. However, judging from the present activities of the Democratic People's Party, it does not appear as though the cause of socialism suffered so very frightfully after all from that parting of ways : yet, what can be said of Shri Roy cannot perhaps be said of all his followers. Undoubtedly, some of that Group could have served socialism well, had they not been bogged in Royism.

The Labour Party (Bengal)—The Punjab Socialist Party—The Punjab Kirti Kisan Party

Before taking up the story of our relations with the Communist Party we shall dispose of the three other parties mentioned above.

The Bengal Labour Party started with an attitude of strong hostility towards the Party. The Party on the other hand endeavoured from the very beginning to wear down this hostility and persuade the Labour Party to enter into a united front pact. Very soon our efforts were successful, and a joint Board was set up with an equal number of representatives of the Bengal Congress Socialist Party and the Labour Party to co-ordinate the activities of both the parties. Some time later the Labour Party merged with the Communist Party; thereafter our relations with it were the same as with the latter. After some time the Labour Party split away from the Communist Party and once again became an independent party, working in alliance with the Forward Bloc. Our relations with it now, as with the Forward Bloc, are friendly and based on mutual co-operation.

As the Punjab Socialist Party, which was formed largely out of the old Naujawan Bharat Sabha, the Party was able to achieve complete success with it. The Punjab Socialist Party was from the

beginning well-disposed towards the Party, and willing to join it. There were for some time certain ideological obstacles in the way : for instance, the Punjab Party's strong antipathy for the Congress. However, in the course of time these obstacles were removed and the Punjab Socialist Party merged with the Congress Socialist Party.

We might also mention here the Punjab Kirti Kisan Group. Our relations with this group have always been friendly; and at one time a large number of Kirti comrades were members of the Punjab Congress Socialist Party.

The Communist Party of India

Let us now turn to our relations with the Communist Party of India. The story of these relations falls into four parts or periods : the first, beginning from the birth of the Party to the Meerut Conference in January 1936; the second, from January 1936 to August 1937; the third, from August 1937 to the beginning of the European War; the fourth, from the beginning of the War till the present.

The first period was marked by the bitterest hostility on the part of the Communist Party, and by ceaseless attempts at co-operation and unity on that of the Party. It might be added that the Party's attitude remained consistently unchanged throughout. Even today in spite of the renewed hostility and billigerency of the Communist Party our attitude of co-operation as between the two revolutionary parties continuous Only the perspective of unity no longer remains, due to the experiences hereinafter described.

As soon as the Party was formed it was faced with malicious and bitter opposition from the Communist Party. It was described as a 'left manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie' and as 'social fascist'—hackneyed expressions of the international communist movement Not only did the Communist Party of India take up this attitude of belligerency; but even its mentors in Britain such as Mr. Palme Dutt, did likewise. The communist movement throughout the world was at that time following an extremely sectarian policy prescribed by the Sixth Congress of the Third International [1928]—a policy aimed at giving a clear-cut identity to the communist parties. This was done everywhere by attacking all other parties that worked in the name of socialism or organized labour. Indeed, the hostility shown to the socialist parties was often greater than that shown to

the bourgeois parties The fruits of this policy were strife and bitterness in the world socialist movement.

In India too, it must have been intolerable to the Communist Party to find an independent socialist party in existence. Immersed in its own narrowness and pettiness, it must have seen is monopoly of Marxism direly threatened : and it girded up its loins to give battle.

How did the Party react to this foolish opposition ? It did not counter-attack; it did not return the vituperation; it did not seek to thwart or defeat the Communist Party. It recognized in the Communist Party a sister revolutionary party, although following at that time a foolish and disastrous policy. In contrast with the Communist Party's policy of hate and strife, it opened up the perspective of a united socialist party, to be evolved by a slow convergence of all socialist streams. To make a beginning it actually proposed to enter into a united front arrangement with the Communist Party. The latter had at that time an open platform in the Red Trade Union Congress—one more of the products of the foolish policy they were following at that time. The Party negotiated with the Red Trade Union Congress and succeeded in persuading it to sign a united front agreement. This was done entirely at the Party's own initiative at a time when the other party was carrying on a bitter campaign against it. There could be no more genuine proof of the Party's earnest desire for socialist unity.

The agreement with the Red Trade Union Congress could not in the very nature of things have gone far. The two parties agreed on joint demonstrations and to 'cease fire'. Since we were not carrying on any war against the Communist Party, the 'cease fire' clause had pertinence to the latter alone. As events showed, the Communist Party did not honour even this limited agreement. In its secret propaganda, its attacks on the Party continued; and even at joint public functions it showed little regard for the clause in the agreement that said that no party should utilize a joint function for partisan propaganda. We put all that down to the long sectarian tradition and practice of the Communist Party and hoped for better results in the future.

At this stage it would be advisable to keep in mind the wide differences that existed then between the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party. It should not be supposed that the

party thought an immediate unity with the Communist Party to be possible. The differences were too great for that. But, the Party certainly believed that if unity was desirable and was to come in the future, it could be possible not by fighting each other but by trying to work together as far as possible. There is no doubt that had the Communist Party worked in the same spirit and really desired unity, there would have been a very different story to tell today.

The Communist Party was then, as it is now, a branch of the Third International. The Congress Socialist Party, on the other hand, was and is an independent organization. More than that: its very birth was in opposition to the line of the International. The Communist Party, following the latter, was outside the Congress and actively opposed to it. It had made attempts to launch organizations in rivalry to the Congress, such as the short-lived Workers' and Peasants' Party and the still-born Anti-imperialist League. In contradiction to this line (which was the line of the Third International) the Party fully supported the Congress and stood for strengthening and developing it further as the instrument of national struggle. The Communist Party considered the Congress a bourgeois organization which communists must shun and fight. The Party looked upon the Congress as a mass national organization, which socialist must enter and develop along their own lines. The third fundamental difference was as regards the trade union movement. The Communist Party had split the movement (again following the dictates of its International) and formed its own miserable Red Trade Union Congress. It is hardly necessary to point out what would become of the trade union movement and workers' solidarity if every little party were to form its own unions. Workers in every industry and every factory would be split up into rival unions fighting among themselves. Yet, even this elementary Marxism was unknown at that time to our communist friends, and if one may venture to suggest, to the Third International too Here again the policy of the Congress Socialist Party was totally different; and it was a truly Marxist policy. The Party believed firmly in the unity of the trade union movement and from the start worked to that end. Till such time as unity was achieved, the Party joined hands with the All-India Trade Union Congress. All unions formed by or under the control of the Party were to be affiliated to the All-India Trade Union Congress. In selecting this Trade Union Congress, out of the three organizations that existed, the Party once

again showed the quality of its judgement, because it was the All-India Trade Union Congress into which the two other organizations were later to merge. We shall instance one more important difference : it is regarding this very question of socialist unity which we are considering. The Communist Party believed in itself as the only true socialist party with a right to exist, and treated all others as enemies. The Party, on the other hand, stood for immediate co-operation among all the socialist groups and the eventual growth of a united socialist party.

During those days as now, the principal communist line of attack was that we were no socialists and had no understanding of Marxism. It was they who were the true interpreters of Marx and Lenin. It is, therefore, of interest to note here that it was not very long before these self-appointed priests of Marxism were eating all their words and repudiating all the fundamental policies which they had been asserting with such half-educated cocksureness. In less than two years they came running into the Congress, disbanded their red trade unions, joined the All-India Trade Union Congress, and at least in words, accepted the objective of socialist unity. The Marxism of the Congress Socialist Party proved sounder than the parrotlike dogmatism of the Communist Party.

To resume our story. Due to the hostility of the Communist Party, the National Executive had, at the time of the first conference in Bombay, made a rule that no member of the [communist] Party could be admitted into the Congress Socialist Party. This was a decision forced upon the Executive by the policy of the Communist Party itself. However, since the earliest days the Executive was determined to bring about a situation in which this ban would become unnecessary and through a process of infiltration and co-operation the two parties would soon become one. Therefore, the General Secretary of the Party and certain other important members of the Executive kept up during the subsequent months a continuous contact with the leaders of the Communist Party. These contacts were very useful to the Party's point of view. This position continued for a year. In the meanwhile the Seventh Congress of the Third International met in Moscow [1935] and decided after eight years to reverse gears. It was, however, some time before the Communist Party of India officially changed its policy regarding the Congress, the Congress Socialist Party or the Trade Union Congress.

In January 1936, the Second Conference of the Party met at Meerut. There acting on the report of the General Secretary, the National Executive unanimously decided to open the doors of the Party to members of the Communist Party subject to its supervision. It should be appreciated that this was entirely an unilateral decision taken at the Party's own initiative. It was based on the belief that important elements in the Communist Party accepted the main ideas of the Party and that by admitting them into the Party, we would be furthering the cause of socialist unity. However, officially, the Communist Party still followed its old policy. And it should be mentioned that at the time when the Congress Socialist Party took such a revolutionary organizational step in the direction of unity, the Communist Party had advanced only to the extent of sending a representative to Meerut to the study this 'left manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie' and submit a report !

It was not till several months later that the Communist Party on its side decided to grasp the proffered hand of comradeship of the Congress Socialist Party. That was at the time of the Lucknow Congress [April 1936]. That was a moment of great satisfaction to us. We thought that we were well on our way towards socialist unity. The Royists were already with us, and we hoped the communists too would now gradually come in, so that very soon as in the course of joint work differences would wear off and mutual confidence would increase, the united socialist party of India would emerge.

It should not be supposed that we were unaware at this stage of the differences that still remained between us and the Communist Party : for instance, the difficulty about international affiliation. We, however, thought that as the movement grew it would be able to solve its problems as they arose, and that there would be no purpose served in trying to solve all possible problems at the start. A mature movement might find means and strength to overcome difficulties entirely beyond the resources of its childhood. Experience has shown that we would have been right in thinking thus only if all the other parties were equally serious and honest about unity.

However, after Meerut a large number of communists joined the Party. It was laid down at Meerut that they would be taken into the Party only with the express permission of the Executive in every case. But in practice no permission was ever taken. The

Executive was aware of this fact, but it did not take a very serious view of it because it did not wish to queer the process by stressing technicalities. This indeed was a great mistake. The communists in this way came into the Party under false pretences, and later when difficulties arose they were able to deny their membership of the Communist Party.

In course of time, as more and more communists entered the Party, disturbing notes began to be heard. During the whole of the later part of 1936 and the following months, reports kept on reaching the Executive that the communists were doing fraction work within the Party and trying to capture its organizations. There were frequent complaints from Andhra. Outside the Party also the relations between our cadres and those of the Communist Party were not very happy. Complaints came particularly from Kanpur, Bombay, Calcutta, i e, the labour areas. It was reported that the communists were found claiming that they would not permit any other party to entrench itself in the labour movement. One wishes, speaking parenthetically, that they had shown equal anxiety in preventing careerists and reformists from entrenching themselves there. One might go further, without closing the parenthesis, and point out that they have indeed always exhibited a strange adeptness in allying with such elements in the labour movement in order to keep out those socialists who did not belong to their church. Regarding the reports of fraction work, the National Executive did no more than warn the Provincial organization to keep an eye on it.

After this situation had dragged on for months, there came in August 1937, a great shock to us which proved to be the turning point in our relations with the Communist Party. With that we reached the end of the second stage of our relations and entered the third. In this instance also, as in the case of the Royists, the initiative towards disruption came from the other side (i.e., the Communist Party in this case). The National Executive was meeting at Patna in August. At this meeting a statement of the Communist Party was read which caused a painful shock and great indignation. The statement was a secret document of the Communist Party and evidently meant only for its members. It said, in brief, that the Congress Socialist Party was not a socialist party, and that the Communist Party would never tolerate a rival party. It went on to say that the Communist Party was the only

real socialist party, and that the Congress Socialist Party was to be developed merely into a platform of left unity.

It is necessary for members of the Party to fully appreciate the nature of the Communist Party statement. It set forth clearly the true aims of the Communist Party with regard to the Congress Socialist Party and explained fully all the later policies of the former. It cannot but be regretted that the Executive at Patna disregarded the dangers that were thus exposed and, in the pursuit of its idealistic aims, committed an organizational blunder. The statement, in the first place, knocked down the whole basis of Lucknow Agreement between the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party. That basis was that both these were socialist parties which in course of time and following certain policies of co-operation would unite to form a single party. Without this basic assumption there could have been no meaning in the slogan of 'socialist unity'. If there was only one socialist party, as the statement pugnaciously asserted, where did the question of unity with another socialist party arise ? In other words, the statement clearly showed that the Communist Party had not given up its monopolistic and sectarian attitude, and that it had really no faith in socialist unity. That slogan merely served it as a convenient device to enter into relations with the Congress Socialist Party and gain access to the positions it held. The statement clearly admitted as much, when it declared that the Congress Socialist Party was to be developed only as a platform—a platform dominated by the Communist Party. Further, when the statement talked of not tolerating a rival socialist party, it again gave the lie to the Communist Party's professions of unity. In what manner could the question of rivalry arise if both parties truly believed in unity ? The statement thus made it clear, firstly that the Communist Party did not believe in socialist unity, because it recognized no other sacialist parties; secondly, that it wanted to destroy the Congress Socialist Party as a socialist party and capture it to be used as its open platform.

All this came as a great shock to the Executive and the indignation was unanimous. There were at that time four 'Trojan horses' of the Communist Party on the Congress Socialist Party Executive. They too joined in the indignation (so that they might not give themselves away). Not a voice was raised in defence or mitigation of that statement. After a short discussion, the Executive

arrived at the unanimous decision that in future no member of the Communist Party should be allowed to enter the Party. That was a mild, and as experience proved, a mistaken decision. Organizational and political considerations required not only a ban on their future entry but also immediate expulsion of the communists, who had already been admitted into the Party. The Executive, however, was eager to avoid doing anything that might make the chances of unity more difficult; and it hoped that the action taken might induce the Communist Party to correct its ways. Also it still hoped that there were important elements in the Communist Party who genuinely stood for unity. This too later proved to be a vain hope.

Thus, the next check to socialist unity after the Royist walk-out came from the Communist Party.

After August 1937, the situation steadily deteriorated, the Party feeling itsetf increasingly paralysed. For months it felt that there was no alternative to expelling the communists and yet the Party hesitated to undo all that it had done before and to let go all the hopes it had so fondly cherished. Indeed, when it came to taking action, the Party continued to harbour and accommodate the communists. It was during this period that the General Secretary of the Party, by way of reorganization, handed over to them the whole of the Andhra Party. This was in due course endorsed by the Executive.

The next landmark of importance in this depressing history is the Lahore Conference of the Party in April 1938. This Conference reinforced the conclusions to which the Party was being driven. At this time the Communist Party conveyed an astonishing note to the National Executive. It was a sort of comic anti-climax to Patna. The note categorically stated that the Communist Party considered the Congress Socialist Party to be a truly revolutionary Marxist Party and believed the socialist unity could be brought about only by the unity of the two parties. This was only eight months after Patna. In eight months the Congress Socialist Party from being a left platform had become a revolutionary Marxist party. What progress we must have made to have so impressed the Indian branch of the Third International ! Nobody was, however, taken in by this comic volte-face of the Communist Party. The real purpose of the note was obvious to everyone, as it must be to the reader. The fact was that the Communist Party was in a fright. Since

Patna, feelings against the tactics of the Communist Party had been growing, and body of opinion was gaining in strength in the Party that the time had come when the communists should be shown the way out. They had too long been allowed, in the name of unity, to take advantage of the Party. The fact that M.R. Masani was Chairman of the Conference added to the fears of the communists. The latter have tried to denounce Masani as a communist-baiter. He, of course, was nothing of the sort. What angered and frightened the communists was his organizational competence and soundness. He disagreed with the communists violently, but was prepared for honest co-operation with them as between two independent parties. But, he was the first to see through their game of disruption and capture, played under the cover of unity. He was, therefore, early to demand the wholesale expulsion of the communists from the party, not as an anti-communist measure, but as a counter-measure to their anti-Congress Socialist Party and capture tactics. Experience has completely vindicated Masani's stand. But to continue. It was the fear that the Party Conference might not only endorse the Patna decision, but also go beyond it, that led the communists to communicate that note to the Party. That they were wholly insincere was made abundantly clear at the Conference itself.

The Executive naturally did not take the Communist Party statement seriously, and the Conference endorsed the Patna Decision. The Party, however, still held fast to the objective of unity, and it put forward the slogan of 'unity in action' as a preliminary process The communist members were allowed to continue in the Party. The weakness of the Executive in this regard was reflected by the Conference. It was clear that the time had come to send the communists packing from the Party, but the Executive refused to face the situation. It had not much faith in the success of its new slogan, 'unity in action', but it clutched at it to save itself from taking an unpleasant decision. As a result the Party embarked on a career of sheer drift which ended but recently.

It has been remarked above that the conduct of the communists at the Conference compleled belied their solemn note. During the elections for the Executive, they made and put up an alternative communist list and voted for it en masse. In other words, even while they talked and breathed unity they made a secret bid to capture the Party. Now, it is elementary politics that capture and

unity politics are poles apart and contradict each other. But in the peculiar dialectics of the communists all contradictions are reconciled. It connot be wonded at, therefore, that they not unoften equate counter-revolution with revolution.

Some months after Lahore come more shocking evidence. A circular of the Communist Party fell into Comrade Masani's hands who published it under the title 'Communist Plot against the Congress Socialist Party'. The circular laid down in detail the tactics to be followed by the communists to capture the organizations of the Party. Here was further evidence of the unity tactics of the Communist Party. For many comrades that circular was the proverbial straw. Yet, the Executive again held its hands, and allowed things to drift. Now it was no longer the ideal or hope of unity that decided the Executive; it was just reluctance to face an unpleasant task. These were dark days for the Party, when lack of decision created a good deal of confusion and weakness. The enemies of the Party did not fail to profit fully by it.

This drift and paralysis of the Party continued. There were only two ways out of the stalemate : either an immediate merger of the Communist Party and the Congress Socialist Party or the creation of a completely homogeneous Congress Socialist Party with all members of other parties immediately removed from it. In view of the experience already granted, there was little possibility of the success of the first alternative. However, as my opinion regarding the communist party died hard I mooted the question with the leaders of that party. It was obvious that without a common ideological basis a merger was out of the question. Therefore, it was agreed to explore such a basis. But there was little progress made in that direction. In the meanwhile differences grew wider between the two parties in the field of day-to-day politics. Then came Tripuri, and then Calcutta.[1] The Communist Party, lacking ballast and independent strength in the national movement, grew panicky and in order to satisfy its ambition to lead the left ran wildly after whoever declaimed loudest.

The first alternative was clearly an impossibility. But, the Executive still lacked the courage to take recourse to the other. This policy of drift which was daily delivering the Party into the hands of the Communist Party drove some of the leading members of the Executive to resign. This produced great consternation in the ranks of the Congress Socialist Party, though it was welcomed

by the Communist Party and its 'Trojan horses' and stooges.

In these circumstances a memorable meeting of the Executive was held in Bombay in 1939, at the time of the All-India Congress Committee session. At this meeting practically every member excepting those who belonged to the Communist Party expressed the view that it was high time to check the drift and stop internal disruption. For this purpose, it was the overwhelming opinion of the Committee that all communists and others who belonged to any other party should be asked to leave the Party. After a long discussion, the question was left by the Committee to my decision as General Secretary. I did not feel happy at the prospect of precipitating a grave crisis in the socialist movement. I gave a sort of compromise decision. I fully accepted the ideal of a homogeneous Congress Socialist Party, but advised that communists who were already members of the Party should not be expelled, as that would lead to much bitterness and mutual destruction. I, however, emphasised that henceforth every attempt should be made to keep the control of the Party in the hands of genuine members, i.e., those who were not members of any other party. The decision was accepted by the Executive. Henceforth, the slogan was that of a homogeneous party. It was an advance over the previous position, but still suffered from not making a complete break from the policy that had led the Party into such a morass.

In practice, the Bombay decision, half-hearted as it was, found still more half-hearted application. In fact, it remained entirely inoperative till the declaration of the European War. And here we must record a remarkable, if also a regrettable, fact. It was after the Bombay decision that the General Secretary, acting on his own authority, allowed eight communists to be admitted into the Allahabad committee of the U.P. Party. To such lengths was the Secretary of the Party prepared to go to accommodate the communists in the hope that they might reciprocate in the same spirit and a new chapter might be opened in the history of the socialist movement in this country. But it was all in vain. Every opportunity offered to the Communist Party was used against the Congress Socialist Party.

In September 1939, came the European War. The War made no change in the policy of our Party as far as it related to socialist unity. We have traced above the development of this question up to the beginning of the War. We have seen how starting with

enthusiasm for a policy of unity by bringing all socialist elements into the Party, we were forced step by step to give up that policy, and, finally, to arrive at the objective of a homogeneous Congress Socialist Party. The emergency created by the War and the possibility of widespread repression and of illegal functioning made it necessary to make certain organizational arrangements and also to give effect to the Bombay decision. Accordingly, soon after the beginning of the War small emergency committees were set up in the provinces, and care was taken to see that they were homogeneous committees. The communists were still within the Party. The Party was still ready for full co-operation with the Communist Party provided it was honest co-operation in actual work and not merely seting up of high-sounding committees.

As regards the Communist Party, soon after the War began, its policy underwent a sudden change. It tore off its mask completely and stood as the sworn enemy of the Congress Socialist Party and of every other progressive organization with which it had worked before, the Congress as well as the Forward Bloc.

It is necessary to relate just one incident to put this volte-face of the Communist Party in its proper perspective. In October 1939 a meeting of the representatives of certain leftist organizations was held at Lucknow at the instance of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. At this meeting a proposal was put forward by the representatives of the Communist Party and the other groups to form a sort of 'joint command' to conduct the anti-War activities of the various groups. The representatives of the [Congress Socialist] Party opposed that proposal as impractical due to lack of sufficient political unanimity and mutual confidence. They made a counter-proposal : namely, that a 'common programme of work' be chalked out to be carried out by all groups in co-operation with one another. This proposal was accepted in the end, and a seven-point programme was chalked out which was accepted by all the representatives present. With that the meeting ended, and it was hoped that since an agreement had been arrived at on the concrete nature of future work, there would be full co-operation at least between the parties that were represented at it. That meeting might well have proved to be of momentous importance. But it was not to be. We had reckoned without the Communist Party.

It was hardly three weeks later than a Communist Party thesis appeared making a frontal attack on the Congress Socialist

Party. With that we were back in the primitive days of 1934. To this day it has not been made clear what it was that led the Communist Party to declare war so suddenly of the Congress Socialist Party. Surely, between the Lucknow meeting and the early part of November when the Communist Party these appeared, or at any time before or after, the Congress Socialist Party had been guilty of no crime against the Communist Party. Only a few weeks before the Communist Party had agreed to carry out a a common programme It was demonstrating a strange method of doing it. Well, be that as it may, the fact is that in November 1939, the Congress Socialist Party completely fell from grace, and since then has been subject to most vicious attack. Indeed an early (1940) Communist Party document has already celebrated the demise of the Congress Socialist Party and examined in a learned Marxian manner, peculiar to the Communist Party alone, the reasons for such a lamentable—or, rather, happy—event. It is not at all an inconsistency if the February 1941 number of the Communist Party organ threatens to publish a history of the Congress Socialist Party since Ramgarh.[2] One may be sure that this will be only a spiritual history—the history of a ghost ! It is only the ghost of the Congress Socialist Party that is playing on the Politburo, and it must slay it on paper to be rid of the nightmare.

Why did the Communist Party suddenly start attacking the Congress Socialist Party and everybody else ? There was a political reason. With the advent of War, the Communist Party discerned the approach of the revolution. At such a moment it did not want that any other party should be about to dispute the leadership of the coming historic event : it desired to appear before the masses—workers, peasants, students (above all students, mark you)—as the sole revolutionary party in the country. It could brook no competition, and when power came to be seized it wanted no shareholders at all. The Communist Party *uber alles* ! It was a magnificent ambition, clearly in accord with the Marxism that the Communist Party understands. The natural corollary of this thesis of megalomania was that other parties must perish, i.e., their hold over the masses must be destroyed. Therefore, the scribes of the Politburo set about filling up reams of paper with stuff highly intelligible to the masses, well-versed as they are in the jargon of the learned writers. And lo and behold, the Congress,

and the Congress Socialist Party have all disappeared into thin air, and the Politburo is soon to be converted into the Council of Commissars !

A lovely dream from which there is sure to be a rather rude awakening. It will not be long before another learned thesis of the Communist Party painfully dilates upon the mistakes of this historic period !

To bring this story to an end. The Congress Socialist Party did not retaliate against the Communist Party offensive. It did not even expel the communists from the Party for some time. It declared that, while it must criticise the mistakes of the Communist Party, it wished it no ill-will and was prepared to co-operate with it as a sister revolutionary party. It raised its voice against the disruption that was being caused to the socialist movement. But all these gestures were rejected with jeers, and the war on the Party went apace. At Ramgarh, when no other alternative was available, the National Executive, more than four years after Meerut, was compelled to expel from the Party all those who were either members of the Communist Party or its agents. Thus, ended a tragic chapter in the history of the India socialist movement. It should be made clear that in taking this decision the Executive was not launching upon any manner of campaign against the Communist Party. That decision was merely an elementary organizational measure, long overdue, and expressed simply in the idea that a party may have no one as a member who is a member or an instrument of a hostile party.

CONCLUSIONS

The above history makes clear the effort made by our Party to bring about unity in the socialist movement and how they failed. Except for the earlier months, this problem of socialist unity was really a problem of the coming together of the Communist Party and the Congress Socialist Party. We have seen how the tactics of the Communist Party made that impossible. But it would be a mistake to blame the Communist Party for those tactics. They were inevitable. In the very nature of things the Communist Party could not have behaved otherwise. This was not clear to us before, otherwise our Party would have been much stronger today. But now that it is clear, every comrade must fully grasp its meaning.

The inevitability of which we have spoken is inherent in the nature of the international communist movement. This movement is not formed from the bottom upwards. The Third International is not an organization of genuine working members, but a central organization controlled entirely from above by the Communist Party of the U.S S.R. with branches in the various countries. The Third International must have a branch in every important country (except those, such as Turkey, the government of which has a pact with the Russian government prohibiting the formation of such a branch). The Communist Party of India is such a branch. It cannot therefore unite with any other party and cease to be a branch. It is possible for the Communist Party to 'unite with another socialist party only when the united party itself becomes a branch of the Third International—in which case unity is a misnomer—or when the Communist Party secretly works as such a branch within the united party hoping to capture it eventually—in which case again unity is a misnomer. Therefore, it is desirable once for all to give up the vague talk of unity with the Communist Party. It is possible to unite with such socialist parties as are not subfeudatories like the Communist Party but unity with the latter has no meaning. Its only meaning is that the Congress Socialist Party too becomes a branch of the Third International, i.e., it becomes a part of the Communist Party.

Here, the question arises : why does not Congress Socialist Party affiliate with the Communist International, i.e , become amalgamated with the Communist Party ? Is the Congrsss Socialist Party anti-Communist International or anti-Russia ? It is neither.

But, the question of affiliation is beset with grave and insuperable difficulties. The Congress Socialist Party is not a party transplanted from outside. It is a growth of the Indian soil. It was not inspired by any outside force. It grew and developed out of the experiences of the Indian people struggling for freedom. Its very formation was a protest and revolt against the line the Third International pursued in India. The initial fact was enough to instil into the Congress Socialist Party entire lack of respect for the wisdom and guidance of the International. Subsequent events did not improve matters. Immediately after the formation of the Party, the Indian branch of the International viciously attacked it. Leaders of the latter, including members of its Central Committee, rushed to denounce it as 'social fascist'. All this was not exactly calculated

to d.aw us nearer the International However, on our own initiative, we did attempt to draw nearer to the Communist Party, but were sorely deceived.

The International claims to be the leader of the World Revolution. As such, it was its duty to encourage and draw together all the revolutionary forces, wherever found Instead it has functioned as a narrow sectarian Church, supporting its own sect and calling curses upon the heads of all others. In the six years of the life of the Congress Socialist Party, in spite of its standing as a significant revolutionary force in the country, the International made no attempts to get into contact with it or help or encourage it in any way. On the other hand, its Indian agents did everything possibie to destroy it. Is it not more appropriate to ask the leader of the World Revolution, why it failed to draw the Congress Socialist Party within its fold ?

In this connection might also be urged the wide divergence between the policies of the Congress Socialist Party and of the International as applied to India. Past differences have been indicated above. Let us turn to the present position. The Communist Party once again is ploughing its lonely furrow and has pitted itself against the Congress, and the Congress Socialist Party. It is condemning outright the satyagraha movement. In a recent publication it made fun of even such a serious thing as the disappearance of Subhas Babu The Communist Party alone will create and lead the revolution. This is the policy of the International. The Congress Socialist Party is totally different. It still stands for co-operation between various groups; it does not oppose the satyagraha movement, nor the Congress. It criticises the inadequacies of the movement, its background of compromise, its future dangers, but co-operates with it, arguing that isolation from the national struggle (limited though it be) would be disastrous for the revolutionary forces. It at the same time works to develop the labour and peasant movements, with a view to percipitating a mass revolutionary struggle when the occasion arises. Thus, once again the Communist Party and the Congress Socialist Party, and therefore the International and the Congress Socialist Party are widely separated in their policies.

We might urge a last consideration. There is a large body of opinion, claiming to be Marxist, in the International working class movement which alleges that the Communist International is no

more than a bureau of the Soviet Foreign Office, and that its policies are solely dictated by the exigencies of Russian foreign policy. Even such a sympathetic author as Edgar Snow in his *Red Star Over China* echoes the same sentiments in his discussions of the relations between the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist International. The frequent and violent twists and turns in the policies of the communist parties throughout the world before and after the War lend colour to this view. Whatever be the truth, one fact is clear—that every communist party must follow the dictates from Moscow because Moscow alone knows what is good or bad for Rusia. Now, the Congress Socialist Party, while recognizing that the position and role of the U.S S R. must enter into every socialist calculation, is not prepared to follow dictates from anywhere, Moreover, affiliating with the International not only means following its dictates, but also being obliged to uphold any and every action of the Russian Government. We are not prepared for such subservience.

The above considerations should make it clear why we cannot affiliate with the Third International. We should add that our attitude nevertheless remains one of utmost cordiality (in spite of the International's attitude of hostility) and however futile it may be the hand of co-operation will always be extended by us.

To return to the Communist Party. It might be asked why, if it did not believe in unity, it agreed to send its members into the Congress Socialist Party. For two obvious reasons. It might be recalled that for some time it refused to have anything to do with us. But when it was ordered by the International to change its policy and to enter the Congress it found itself faced with a serious problem. It had no contacts with the Congress, and of course, it must become at once the leader of the national forces. It was here that it found in the Congress Socialist Party an ideal instrument. The Congress Socialist Party held a strategic position within the Congress. The communists were anxious to get into the Provincial Congress Committees, the Executives, the All-India Congress Committee, possibiy the Working Committee. With their own resources it was impossible for them to get anywhere near them. They were not four-anna members yet. Here was the Congress Socialist Party with its members even in the highest committees. 'Three cheers for the Congress Socialist Party. Let us join it.' They did, and the Congress Socialist Party votes sent them as high as

the All-India Congress Committee and the Provincial Executives. In addition, being an open party, the Congress Socialist Party afforded a splendid platform for self-advertisement to these, till then, practically unknown communists. What was the other reason for their entering the Party ? It has been pointed out that in their view no socialist party apart from the Communist Party had any right to exist. The growth of the Congress Socialist Party into an independent party was a danger to their monopoly Therefore, they took advantage of the opportunity to enter the Party so as either to capture or break it up. These were the two purposes that brought them into the Party. But, in order to gain admittance, they had to accept the slogan of socialist unity, for otherwise there was no reason why the Congress Socialist Party should have let them come in. So, behind the smokescreen of unity, they worked out their plans.

The foregoing has made it clear that the whole idea of unity with a party like the Communist Party was misconceived and the fundamental difficulties were not understood. But apart from that the manner in which unity was sought to be brought about was itself a grievous mistake. It was very wrong to have admitted members of other Parties into our Party. This was against all sound principles of organization. The experiment should never be repeated. It cannot but lead to internal confusion and conflict. It should be kept in mind that nowhere in the world has an attempt to unite two parties been made by allowing the infiltration by members of one into the other. The Congress Socialist Party tried it and found it to be a disastrous experiment.

In this connection a point is often made in Party discussions Why was the Communist Party alone able to do fraction work ? Why could we not do the same ? For two simple reasons. Communists had the opportunity of doing it, because we had given them a place in the Party. We had no such opportunity, because we had neither the desire nor the occasion to enter their party. Secondly, and this is the more important reason, fraction work is ocntradictory to unity. We believed sincerely in unity; therefore, the question of fraction work did not arise at all

Since the decision to expel the communists was taken, persistent propaganda has been carried on by the Communist Party to represent it as an anti-communist drive. It should be fully understood that there was nothing anti-communist in that decision. It

was a measure of self-defence taken against the anti-Congress Socialist Party drive of the Communist Party. The communists had no place in our Party by right; they had been admitted for a specific purpose, namely, that of uniting the two parties. When the Communist Party turned into an open enemy of the Congress Socialist Party and started a vigorous campaign to destroy it, and when the communists within the Congress Socialist Party began to function openly as its enemies, trying to undermine its influence and solidarity, the least that the Party could do was to remove them from its membership No party can afford to keep within its ranks members who are its open enemies. It should, however, be realized at the same time that the expulsion of the communists was in no manner an offensive against the Communist Party itself as an independent party.

With relation to the expulsion of the Communists a question is often asked, sometimes inspired by communists, whether the National Executive was a competent body to take such a decision. Is not the Party Conference the proper authority to decide such questions ? The answer is that the National Executive was fully competent to take the decision in question. Since the beginning of this matter, it has always been the Executive that took decisions regarding it. The decision to admit the communists into the Party was not a decision of any Party Conference, but of the Executive at Meerut. Had it been a Conference decision, only another Conference could have rescinded it. As it was, the Executive was fully competent to rescind it. There was a reason why this matter was kept strictly confined to the Executive. The Communist Party was and is an illegal party. Any question relating to it could not be taken to the Conference. It was only during the Congress Ministries when a measure of civil liberties was enjoyed that the matter was first discussed with any measure of freedom.

In raising the question just discussed, it is the purpose of communists to paint the Executive as an anti-communist body, and to suggest that if the matter had been referred to a Party Conference, the result would have been different. The history of our relations with the communists, given earlier is enough to show to what lengths the Executive went to accommodate them. When the Executive at Meerut decided to admit them into the Party, it was under no pressure from the rank and file. Subsequently. when even after clear proof of their disruptive tactics, the Executive bore

with them, it was again under no such pressure. When the Andhra Party was handed over to them, when even after the Bombay decision, eight communists were admitted into the Allahabad Committee, it was not in response to any clamour from the rank and file. When even today, in spite of the Communist Party crusade against the Party, the Executive offers it its hand of co-operation, it is not out of any fear of the rank and file. Nothing can be more ridiculous than this attempt of the Communist Party to try to put the members of the Party against the Executive.

Another common, and often similarly inspired question, is : why should there be two socialist parties; is not Marxism one and indivisible ? This whole pamphlet is an answer to this question. Yes, Marxism is one and indivisible. The important question, however, is, how is Marxism to be applied to a given social situation ? In 1934 too Marxism was one. Yet the way the Communist Party and the Third International applied it and the way the Congress Socialist Party applied it, were poles apart. There you have the answer in a nutshell.

A Marxist never tries to understand a social fact by itself. He understands it historically and in relation with other facts. We all wish that there were only one Marxist party. But, if we wish to understand how in a concrete situation two Marxist parties came to exist, we must look at the matter historically. During the national struggle of 1930-34 there was a considerable radicalization of the younger cadres of the Congress. By 1934 a coherent socialist group crystallized. Between this group and the existing group, i.e., the Communist Party, there was an impenetrable wall in the shape of the latter's attitude towards and isolation from the Congress. A new party was bound to be formed : the Congress Socialist Party thus came into being as a result of the mistaken policy of the Communist Party and the Communist International.

What happened after this second party was formed has already been described in detail. Since its birth this Party, i.e., Congress Socialist Party, made attempts to create a single Marxist party. It failed because the Communist Party did not want unity. As a result of this historical process, there are still two Parties in existence. The present differences between the two parties have already been discussed, as also the difficulty arising from the

question of international affiliation. As long as these differences and difficulties last, there will continue to be two parties.

To many this would appear to be unfortunate, as it does to me, but in the circumstances described in detail in this pamphlet it is equally clear to me that it is inevitable. I am glad about one thing : that in spite of the misgivings of some friends we tried the experiment as was consistent with the attitude of a party which from its very birth endeavoured to bring about as close a co-operation as possible between all the socialist groups in the country, if not actual unity. I can also say with confidence that if the other groups had also adopted a less sectarian attitude the result of our endeavours might have been different. Let us hope that some day, in the not distant future, it will be realized that the cause is greater than petty factional or sectarian advantages.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The reference here is to the annual Congress session at Tripuri followed by the meeting of the A.I.C.C. in Calcutta, both in 1939.
2. This refers to the annual Congress session, held at Ramgarh in March 1940.

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FROM SOCIALISM TO SARVODAYA*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

It was three years ago, at the Bodh Gaya Sarvodaya Sammelan, that I decided to give up politics. But I had continued to be a member of the PSP; though apart from attending an occasional meeting or offering occasional advice I took no part in the activities of the Party. Sometime before the last General Election I came to the decision that I should give up even the sleeping membership of the PSP. But Acharyaji was ill and I did not want to take the step without discussing the matter with him. To the great misfortune of this country and of the socialist cause, Acharya Narendra Deva passed away. It was a staggering below to the PSP, which had already been weakened by a split. Leading comrades, therefore, pleaded with me not to announce my resignation till the elections were over. I agreed, but it was understood that soon after the elections the announcement would be made. The delay in doing this has been due entirely to the fact that I was anxious to place before you and before the country generally the reasons that led me to take such a drastic step—i.e., a step that was natural to me but appears so drastic to others. Almost every day someone or another raises the question with me why at all should I have given up politics. The faith and hope that people seem to repose in politics appear pitiable to me, but I find it difficult to explain to every one individually the rationale of my

*Statement issued to PSP members to JP's leaving the party in 1957.

action. I am attempting to do so here.

The hold of politics on the minds of people is such and its alternative is in such an incipient state yet, that I shall not probably be able to persuade many of those who may read this statement; but I do hope there will be more mutual understanding and also a quickening of interest in the ideas herein propounded. There is also another aspect of the matter. Everyone views things from his own particular background. Those who have not gone through the experiences which I have passed through, nor pursued the ideals which have been mine might fail to appreciate my reasoning. A new enthusiast for socialism, or the class struggle, or political action, or parliamentary democracy may not perhaps be able to follow me until he has come to enquire how the drawbacks that he has discovered in his particular enthusiasm can be remedied. I am not for a moment suggesting that I have arrived at a flawless solution of all social problems or that sarvodaya is the last world in social philosophy. Man is ever progressing towards the truth, for he is by nature an enquiring being. He will never be able to reach the ultimate truth, but, by gradually eliminating untruth, he will be able slowly to approach truth. There is no doubt that many flaws in sarvodaya thought and practice will be discovered and removed in the future, and thus the human mind will keep up its ascent to truth. But I do believe that sarvodaya represents a distinct advance over the existing social philosophies and systems. I shall try to explain the process through which I arrived at this conclusion. What follows is by no means a full statement for the sarvodaya philosophy, for which task I have no adequate equipment in any case, but a narration of the evolution of my own thinking that led me finally to renounce politics.

FROM NON-CO-OPERATION TO COMMUNISM

The past course of my life might well appear to the outsider as a zigzag and tortuous chart of unsteadiness and blind groping. But as I look back I discern in it a uniform line of development. The groping undeniably was there, but it was certainly not blind; there were clear beacons of light that remained undimmed and unaltered from the beginning and that led me on to my apparently tortuous path. I, at least, am not sorry for having made this zigzag

journey, for, it has made me the surer of the path that I have now decided to tread.

As a boy, like most boys of those days, I was an ardent nationalist and leaned towards the revolutionary cult of which Bengal was the noble leader at that time. But even then the story of the South African satyagaha had fascinated my young heart. Before my revolutionary leanings could mature, Gandhiji's first non-co-operation movement swept over the land as a strangely uplifting hurricane. I, too, was one of the thousands of young men of those days, who, like leaves in the storm, were swept away and momentarily lifted up to the skies. That brief experience of soaring up with the winds of a great idea left imprints on the inner being that time and much familiarity with ugliness of reality have not removed.

It was then that freedom become one of the beacon lights of my life, and it has remained so ever since. Freedom, with the passing of the years, transcended the more freedom of my country and embraced freedom of man everywhere and from every sort of trammel—above all, it meant freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind, freedom of the spirit. This freedom has become a passion of life and I shall not see it compromised for bread, for power, for security, for prosperity, for the glory of the State or for anything else.

Strangely enough, it was in the land or resilient and successful capitalism, in the United States of America, which was my home from 1922 to 1929, that I become a convert to Marxism, or more precisely, to Soviet Communism as it was then. It was at Madison, Wisconsin, the home of La Follette progressivism then, that in the company of Jewish and European-born fellow students I drank deep at the fountain of Marxism. I think we left nothing unread of Marxism that was available in the English language than and with the help of a brilliant student of German read some of the un-translated Marxian classics. The pungent writing of M.N. Roy that found their way from Europe into the communist cells, particularly of Asian students completed the conversion to Marxism.

Freedom still remained the unchanging goal, but the Marxian scienee of revolution seemed to offer a surer and quicker road to it than Gandhiji's technique of civil disobedience and non-co-operation. The thrilling success of the great Lenin, accounts of which

we consumed with unsatiated hunger, seemed to establish beyond doubt the supremacy of the Marxian way to revolution.

At the same time, Marxism provided another beacon of light for me : equality and brotherhood. Freedom was not enough. It must mean freedom for all—even the lowliest—and this freedom must include freedom from exploitation, from hunger, from poverty. I cannot say what were the early experiences that had laid the foundations in the subconscious mind of sympathy with poverty, and suffering. But, the latent sympathy certainly was there, and it was awakened and brought to the surface of conscious living by Marxism. This process was reinforced by the mode of my life in the United States. Coming from the lower middle class, I hardly received any help from my family and had to work as an ordinary labourer in field and factory to earn my upkeep and the expenses of university education. At that time I was not very certain about Gandhiji's stand on the vital question of equality which captivated me as much as the ideal of freedom As a matter of fact, Roy's writings of those days (though Roy, too, later travelled far from those positions) persuaded me to believe that Gandhiji was against the social revolution and would at a moment of crisis hasten to uphold the system of exploitation and inequality. It did not understand then that Gandhiji had his own conception of the social revolution and of the means to achieve it.

FROM COMMUNISM TO DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

The end of 1929, when I returned to my country, was not a propitious time for Marxism Nationalism was reaching white heat and when, in December of that year, Gandhiji failed to persuade Lord Irwin (as he then was) to agree to full "dominion status" for India, in terms of the Calcutta Congress Resolution (1928), the stage was set for a gigantic leap towards national freedom. Complete independence was set as the goal of the nation, and early next year Mahatma Gandhi launched his celebrated Salt Satyagraha. Naturally, I plunged into the fray with all my heart. But I did not find the Indian communists anywhere on the battle lines. Some of them, no doubt, were in prison in connection with the Meerut Conspiracy case. But there were many who were outside and the underground organisation of the CPI did exist in some from or other. But even in the underground of the national movement,

where I soon found myself, the communists were nowhere in evidence, though sub-terranean channels could have easily connected the two undergrounds. Worse, I came to know that they were denouncing the national movement as bourgeois and Mahatma Gandhi as a lackey of the Indian bourgeoisie. I do not wish to recall that whole story of folly and shame. I have made a reference to it here only to indicate how my differences arose with the Indian communists and their brand of Marxism. The communists in India were only following, of course, the policy laid down by the Third or Communist International which by then had come completey under the leadership of Stalin. The patently mistaken policy that the Comintern had been following since 1928 and which had resulted in the division of the labour and socialist movements throughout the world and in the isolation of the communists from the national movements in all the colonial countries, appeared to me, as indeed it was later acknowledged to be, contrary to Marxist theory generally and specifically to the famous colonial policy enunciated by Lenin. My differences with the CPI thus marked the beginning of my ideological alienation from Soviet Russia itself, which to me was till then the paragon and exemplar of all communist virtues. The ideological conflict and struggle for power that had gone on in Russia for some years prior to this had not yet produced any positive reaction in me, apart from a suppressed anxiety. Indeed, there was not much information available yet regarding those matters. But when at home I was face to face with a Soviet dictated policy which my Marxism just could not be reconciled with, I could not help being somewhat alienated.

I naturally kept away from the CPI and joined the ranks of the soldiers of freedom. But freedom or swaraj had come by then to mean much more to me than mere national independence. Free India to me meant socialist India and swaraj the rule of the poor and down-trodden. Congress policy and programme on this score, in spite of the famous Karachi declaration (1931), seemed vague and inadequate. Naturally, with other like-minded fighters for freedom, we formed the Congress Socialist Party so that the social policy of the Congress might become more definitely socialist and the fight for independence itself might be conducted in a more revolutionary manner—which meant in Marxian terminology, the linking of the movement for national freedom with the movement for economic and social emancipation of the masses. The Congress

Socialist Party played a notable part in giving shape to the socio-economic content of Congress policy and a hard edge to the struggle for freedom. By and large, the Congress Socialists were among the most uncompromising and undaunted soldiers of freedom.

As the national movement raged in the early thirties, shocking developments were taking place in Europe which were crowned eventually by Hitler's rise to absolute power. Stalin had predicted an early fall for Hitler, because a half-mad person was not likely to solve the complex and difficult problems of Germany; and on the rubble of Hitler's power, so had Stalin prophesied, would be raised that edifice of communist Germany. When nothing of the sort happened, however; when Hitler, on the countrary, consolidated his power and suppressed the communists and the socialists and the great trade unions; when he began to prepare for world conquest and when his plans began to succeed, fright ultimately overtook the master of the Kremlin, and then a volte face was quickly affected.

It is the vogue now to dig Stalin's mistakes out of the grave. Khruschev has dug out some. Zhukov seems enger to dig deeper. I have no desire to follow this vogue, but I should like to repeat what I said elsewhere that a time will come when the gravest of Stalin's mistakes, the costliest and the most criminal—would be pronounced to be the disruptive policies which he followed that made it possible for Hitler to seize power. Had not the German communists declared, under Stalin's inspiration, the social democrats to be "the enemy number one" and the Nazis enemy only after them, Hitler could never have become the master of Germany. If the policy of socialist unity and popular front which was adopted after the victory of Nazism had been followed from the beginning, the course of history would have been different and the horrors of Hitlerism and the Second World War forestalled or at least vastly mitigated.

The popular front policy had its echo in India in the CPI's own dutiful volte face and its sudden recognition and support, after years of abuse and calumny, of the Indian National Congress as a National Front. Siill wedded to Marxism, this new policy filled my heart with job and sent my hopes rising high. I began to dream of the possibility of a united socialist-communist party and of the rapid strides that both the freedom movement and Indian socialism

could make under such united leadership !

Some of my leading colleagues such as Ram Manohar Lohia, M.R. Massani, Achyut Patwardhan and Asoka Mehta were opposed to this policy and felt sure that it would end in disaster. But my Marxist zeal had the better of me, and with the support of such a respected colleague as Narendra Deva I went ahead with my dreams and hopes. A compact was arrived at with the CPI, according to which membership of the CSP was opened to the communists, CSP branches, particularly in the South, were deliberately handed over to them in preference to loyal CSPers, communists were elected to the AICC and other Congress bodies with CSP support, and in the trade union movement it was agreed to work together.

The disastrous consequences of that policy are well known, one of which, incidentally, was that the whole of the South was lost by the CSP to the CPI. But that nightmarish experience resulted in one great good. It taught us a great lesson in politics. We learnt, some of us with not a little regret, that there cannot be any unity with an "official" communist party (i.e, a party affiliated to the Comintern or approved of by the Kremlin); that such a communist party is not a free agent but a tool of Moscow; that the primary loyalty of the members of such a party is first to Russia and only then to anybody else; that when the communist parties talk of united front, it is always a ruse and at best a temporary policy dictated by the exigencies of the situation; that their unswerving goal is always monolithic communist rule; that the communists can never think of sharing power with any one, except as a makeshift with convenient stooges. These were valuable lessons, but perhaps the price paid was too high. The war further reinforced these conclusions and led to a decisive annulment of the engagement that had been entered into with so much hope.

International communism is presently going through the pangs of a new birth, but it is too early yet to say whether the issue will be still-born or otherwise. Men like me wish with all their heart for the happier eventuality.

Apart from our own direct experience with the CPI, certain other developments had been taking place about the same time in Soviet Russia itself that powerfully influenced my thinking. These were the infamous trials of renowned Russian communist leaders, whose writings I had eagerly devoured and who were to me great

revolutionary heroes, who had made, as Lenin's closest lieutenants, the greatest revolution in history.

Along with the accounts of these trials came studies by men, whom I believed to be honest, of the iniquitous regime that had in course of time been clamped down upon Russia. Eugene Lyons' *Assignment in Utopia*—a fine literary work to my mind—was one of the earliest studies that deeply disturbed me. Then came other accounts, John Dewey's probe into the Trotsky affair and his findings were impossible to resist. The accusations against men like Kamenev, Zinoviev, Radek, Rykov, Bukharin and their alleged confessions were revolting in the extreme. Other and lesser lights of the communist firmament followed the same gruesome fate. Khrushchev has now denounced some of the later trials in which he himself did not have a hand. I have no doubt that as freedom advances in Soviet Russia, other communist leaders will expose other atrocities and a day will come when even Trotsky will be rehabilitated.

Howsoever, that may be, all these events and experiences compelled me to re-examine the basic postulates of Marxism. Most of my colleagues in the socialist movement are acquainted with that painful process of re-thinking because we passed together through that phase. The whole course of development of the CSP and then of the (old) Socialist Party was vitally influenced by this process of ideological re-education.

The CSP had started as a Marxist-Leninist group; and we always claimed during the earlier years that both the CPI and the Kremlin were misapplying Marxism-Leninism to India particularly and to the world situation generally. But now I came seriously to question if Marxism-Leninism, no matter what its interpretation; was itself a safe guide to the social revolution and to socialism. If the theory of violence as a midwife of revolution was not challenged in its entirety, at least this much became clear to me (*a*) that in a society where it was possible for the people by democratic means to bring about social change it would be counter-revolutionary to resort to violence and (*b*) that socialism could not exist, nor be created, in the absence of the democratic freedoms. As a logical corollary, I rejected the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which in effect meant the dictatorship of a bureaucratic oligarchy.

The Russian revolution had started as a people's revolution

that had the active support of the broad masses of Czarist Russia, but Lenin converted it into a minority revolution when he forcibly dissolved the Constituent Assembly in which he was in a small minority and seized power with the help of rebel soldiers and the urban working class. The subsequent miscarriage of the revolution and distortion of socialism, to my mind, was the direct result of the forcible seizure of power by a minority.

Thus I was led to the couclusion that even where the people lacked the democratic freedoms, a violent revolution must have popular support and the revolutionary government must have the backing of the majority of the people. It is easier during a revolution for the popular will to be expressed than during constitutional elections. A social revolution must be allowed full freedom to find its own democratic expression. The people's instinct is always in favour of freedom and democracy and it is never natural for them deliberately to subject themselves to a dictatorship. The communists everywhere, under Lenin's brilliant inspiration, have tried by devious methods to clamp down upon the people their minority and dictatorial rule. Perhaps we have an exception to this in China where a larger section of the people seems to have been with Mao Tse-tung than with Chiang Kai-shek, though that does not mean that the Chinese Government is not a dictatorship. Perhaps it is a dictatorship of the majority over the minority. Perhaps, again, this is so in Yugoslavia. Elsewhere communist rule is a minority rule. But whether in minority or majority, the communists, wherever in power, have invariably established a dictatorship which in their usual "double talk" language they call people's or even socialist democracy. All this drove me to the conclusion that the path to socialism did not pass through dictatorship of any kind.

The Soviet experience made it further clear to me that socialism was not merely the negation of capitalism; that it was possible for capitalism to be destroyed, for industry, trade, banking, agriculture—all to be nationalised and collectivised, and yet to remain far from socialism : nay, not only to remain far from socialism, but even to go counter to it. In Soviet Russia we saw not only denial of "formal" freedom, but also denial of social justice, of equality; we saw the growth of a new class of bureaucratic rulers, of new froms of exploitation. All this was not only the absence of socialism but also its negation.

It seemed to me that all that had happened in Russia was not the result of the wicked deeds of a paranoiac, a Khrushchev would have us believe now, but the end product of the socio-economic system that was set up there. Over-centralisation of political and economic authority and total statism were clearly at the bottom of the evil Looking back even that does not appear to be a sufficient answer now, because it is pertinent to ask what was at the bottom of the over-centralisation and the statism The answer seems to be two-fold.

One. Marx conceived the socialist revolution as a historic process to be brought about by the proletariat, which would naturally constitute the great majority of the population of a fully industrialised bourgeois nation. Lenin, on the other hand, sought to engineer a socialist revolution in an industrially bacaward country through a seizure of power by a determined band of revolutionaries, organised in a highly centralised and semi-militarily disciplined party. As John Kautsky puts it in his excellent article, "From Marx to Mao" (*Soviet Survey*, June-July 1957) :

Marx believed that socialism would grow out of existing material condition, and that the working class itself would be the revolutionary agent introducing socialism at a time when the economy had reached the necessary maturity. At the root of Lenin's thought, on the other hand, as at that of all the impatient pre-Marxian socialists from Babeuf to Bakunin lay the notion that the realisation of socialism was a matter not of historically conditioned pre-requisites, but merely of insight, will, and above all, of the conquest of political power.

Two. Stalin, following Lenin's direction, carried through a highly pressurised and forced process of industrialisation of a backward country. This, in the very nature of things, could not be accomplished without regimentation, compulsion and suppression of freedom. As Professor Paul A. Baran, perhaps the only Marxist teaching at a major American University (Stanford), writes (*The Political Economy of Growth*, N.Y. 1957) :

It is merely the cult of personality in reverse to ascribe all the crimes and errors committed in the Soviet Union before the Second World War and in all of Eastern and South Eastern Europe after it to the evil personalities of Stalin, Beria, and their associates. Matters are not so simple; and the general feeling is

wholly understandable that it is indeed the 'entire system' that must be held responsible for what was perpetrated by the leadership. Yet it is a grievous fallacy to conclude from this that socialism is the entire 'system' that needs to be repudiated. For it is not socialism that can be fairly charged with the misdeeds of Stalin and his puppets—*it is the political system that evolved from the drive to develop at breakneck speed a backward country threatened by foreign aggression and in face of internal resistance.* (Italics in the original.)

These two social processes together explain the politico-economic forms that ultimately came to established in Russia and have since been copied in every communist country.

This incidentally has a great lesson for India and, indeed, for all the industrially backward countries of Asia. Every Asian country is eager to force the pace towards industrialisation. Russia and the other communist countries warn us of what happens when that pace is forced too hard. Asia, therefore, must find its own road to socialism and its own pattern of industrialisation It would be an illusion to think that the pace of industrialisation would not matter if the process were carried out under democratic aegis; beyond a certain limit the pace itself would give rise necessarily to conditions of dictatorship.

As I began to perceive some of these things, my mind naturally turned towards ideas of decentralisation and the gradual attenuation of the State and the fashioning of alternative forms of collective behaviour and social control.

In Marxism any means are good means provided they serve the ends of the social revolution. Thus, Marxism as a philosophy of action is amoral. But though the Marxisis are roundly denounced for their amoralism, the latter is not their peculiar speciality by any means. Politicians of all brands from time immemorial have practised amoralism, no matter how much they might have denounced it in words. Even today the axiom about the end justifying the means is the basis of political action everywhere. It is rarely, as when a great soul like Mahatma Gandhi strays into the political field, that a serious attempt is made to wed politics to morality.

The evil ends that had resulted from the evil means in Russia, particularly the foul means that were used to perpetrate the staggering crimes during the purges, revolted me from the

"revolutionary ethics" of Marxism and forced me to question if good ends could ever be achieved by bad means.

It will be noticed that all this questioning and rethinking was gradually bringing me nearer to Gandhiji. But I had not yet been completely converted and so found myself at the half-way house of democratic socialism.

During my more ardent Marxian days I was a bitter critic, naturally, of European social democracy and British fabianism and pragmatic socialism. On the rebound, therefore, I was anxious not to get stuck in what I had so long considered to be the quagmire of reformism and revisionism. Mine would yet be a revolutionary socialism, I thought, which would transform society from the roots and would yet preserve and uphold the great human values of freedom, equality and brotherhood. It must be admitted that to give a concrete form to this new socialism was not easy, and the task is yet to be fulfilled.

Since Asia regained her political freedom from Europe (the process is yet to be completed), European socialists have been visiting us and giving us all manner of advice All this advice and friendship are welcome, but there is one little matter which the European socialists must not forget. If European communism has failed, European socialism has been no conspicuous success, either. It was Germany whose Social Democraiic Party was a pride of international socialism and which has been nurtured by some of the greatest names in the history of socialism—Engels himself, Bebel, Kaurtsky, the elder Liebknecht (to whom Marx had dedicated the first volume of his *Capital*) and many others. And yet German Social Democracy, when presented a chance by history after the First World War, foundered hopelessly. The record of French socialism has been most depressing, the crowning infamy being the association of the Guy Mollet Government with the British Conservative Government in the imperialist attack on Egypt (1956). British Labour under Attlee—particularly during Attlee's first government (1945-1950)—no doubt, set a fine record both at home and abroad. And during the Egyptian interlude Gaitskell's leadership doubtlessly raised high the prestige of British socialism. But there are many skeletons yet in the cupboard of British socialists and Great Britain is far away yet from a socialist democracy. The Welfare State, which is constantly under Conservative fire, is a poor substitute for socialism, and that too seems

to be in the danger of being converted into the "opportunity state" of Macmillan. True, in Scandinavia, particularly in Sweden, democratic socialism has achieved a larger measure of success, but there, too, it cannot be said that the socialist ideals have been fully realised. Perhaps the comparative success of socialism in Sweden has been due, among other things, to the small size of the Swedish community and the relatively greater emphasis on the non-State forms of socialism, such as co-operation; both factors, as we shall see, are of great peritnence to the evolution of socialism into sarvodaya.

European socialism, both Marxian and non-Marxian, is, among other things, the picture of an industrialised society. Socialism, according to Marx as much as to other European socialist thinkers, was a stage of society that came after the maturing of capitalism. In Asia industrial capitalist development is in its infancy and Asian countries are overwhelmingly rural and agrarian communities. The task of building up socialism in such an environment is not familiar to European socialits; so there is little guidance that can be obtained from their experience. The communists have no doubt been successful—in the sense of capturing power—precisely in backward and rural communities, such as Russia and China. But the "socialism" that they have built up is a far cry from the brotherhood of the equal and the free which to me is the essence of true socialism.

Asian socialists, therefore, are left very much to their own devices. I am not suggesting that we have nothing to learn from Western socialism of Rnssian communism, but the bulk of our work of thinking, experimenting, innovating, we have to do ourselves. I am afraid this process of original enquiry has been halted for the past few years in the Indian socialist movement. It is time that the thread of enquiry is picked up again. This process should be facilited by two different trends of development: one, the unfolding of the Gandhian technique of social revolution and reconstruction as exemplified in the Bhoodan, Gramdan and Gramraj movements and the accumulating experience of State ownership and bureaucratic management of economic enterprise which is being misconceived as socialism.

This process of re-examination and re-evaluation that I have briefiy traced above was a collective experience of those who were working in the CSP and the Socialist Party. The conclusions that

I have indicated above were also collective in nature. The emphasis on democracy, the need for decentralisation, the realisation that means must be morally consistent with the ends—these were the common conculsions drawn from a common experience. Thus, the Marxist-Leninist CSP, through several incarnations, developed into the democratic-socialist PSP.

FROM SOCIALISM TO SARVODAYA

Thus far I travelled together with my colleagues in happy comradeship, the memory of which will sweeten the remaining part of my life. But some years back my journey took a turning where we parted company. That parting began with what has come to be grandiloquently known as *Jeevandan* (1954), but which was no more than a decision on my part to withdraw from party-and-power politics and to devote the rest of my life to the *Bhoodan* and Sarvodaya movement.

The same old beacon lights of freedom, equality and brotherhood that had guided the course of my life and brought me to democratic socialism, drew me onwards around this turning of the road. My regret is that I did not reach this point in my life's journey while Gandhiji was still in our midst. However, some years back it became clear to me that socialism as we understand it today cannot take mankind to the sublime goals, of freedom, equality, brotherhood and peace. Socialism, no doubt, gives promise to bring mankind closer to those goals than any other competing social philosophy. But I am persuaded that unless socialism is transformed into sarvodaya, those goals would remain beyond its reach; and just as we had to taste the ashes of independence, so future generations may have to taste the ashes of socialism.

My final break with Marxism, though not with politics, had come during the three weeks fast at Poona (1952). It was then that a long process of questioning started by the Russian purges came to an end and it became clear that materialism as a philosophical outlook could not provide any basis for ethical conduct and any incentive for goodness.

If man and his consciousness and the society and culture which he has built up are mere manifestations of matter—howsoever dialectically active—I can see no reason why in such a society anyone should try to be good, that is, be generous, kind unselfish.

Why should then one feel sympathy with those who are weak, poor or sick ? What is matter will dissolve into matter after death. So what incentive can there be for moral behaviour ? Lust for power or wealth, or desire to win the acclaim of the people, or the regard of one's peers, may be incentives to action, but such incentives can have no concern with valuations of right or wrong. Ethical ideas have no doubt a history and a social origin, but when the individual begins to question his inherited standards of conduct and asks himself, why he should act ethically, materialism offers him no answer. A person may have grown up with the ideals of social service, sacrifice, freedom, equality and the rest. But, if he begins latter to ask himself why he should subscribe to those ideals at all and put himself to trouble and loss on their account, the philosophy of materialism, dialectical or otherwise, would not be able to give him any satisfactory answer. I am not suggesting that among philosophical materialists there have not been examples of great sacrifice for noble causes. What I am suggesting is that there action was not consistent with their philosophy.

A way out of this difficulty may be the assumption that the human being is an automation, that his behaviour is wholly conditioned and that he has no choice of action and no freedom of will. On this assumption, of course, Marx and Lenin could not help work and suffer for the exploited peoples of the earth. But I doubt whether even the most bigoted Marxist would be prepared to reduce man to such a mechanical entity. Indeed, the whole Marxian theory of revolutionary leadership is based on the assumption of free will.

A great debate has raged in philosophy whether matter came first or consciousness. The point is that no matter which came first, there are today modes of existence that may be described as matter and consciousness The mistake Marxism made was to assume that consciousness (whatever its origin) could be understood in the same manner as matter. It did not realise that the laws of matter cannot be applied to the realm of consciousness. The study of matter is an objective exploration, whereas that the consciousness is subjective realisation. The study of matter, the objective exploration, science in short, is necessarily amoral. The Marxists (and the materialists generally), having reduced consciousness to a behaviour of matter, naturally knocked the bottom out of ethics. They talk a good deal no doubt of revolutionary ethics, but that

is nothing more than the crassest application of the theory that the end justifies the means. Once an individual persuades himself, sincerely or otherwise, that he is on the side of the revolution (or the party or the people) he is free to commit any infamy whatsoever.

Not only the Marxists and materialists, but also those who differ from them in philosophy attempt to understand consciousness by the methods of science. Mental science also, therefore, provides no basis for moral behaviour. Nor is it ever possible for science to understand consciousness, which can only be subjectively experienced. Subjective experience is by its very nature incapable of being expressed in material categories. Therefore, all the mystics and yogis who had experience of subjective reality, or absolute consciousness, have been unable to express it in any language. As Roger Godel has said : "The philosopher thinks his philosophy; the sage lives his wisdom."

Modern science has reached a point where dualism of matter and consciousness becomes too tenuous to be real. Says Godel in his essay on the Contemporary Science and the Liberative Experience of Yoga :

But now suddenly—around a bend of quantum mechanics—exploration of the objective field brings the theorist of the physical sciences to a most disquieting position; before him appears an ambiguous universe where the observer and the phenomenon observed are inextricably commingled. So close is their confrontation that each is reflected in the other, powerless to separate or to fuse.

In this realm of indetermination, all the symbols and formulas familiar to our experience of things vanish. Notions of energy and of matter require so profound a transformation as to lose their original meaning; energy condenses into matter, matter dematerialises into radiation. The waves associated with the propagation of light quanta need no substratum in order to propagate in space-time; they undulate neither in a fluid, nor in a solid, nor yet in gas. Only the unreal thread of analogy links them to the image of a wave of rippling the surface of water. They are in fact waves of probability, waves of consciousness which our thought projects afar : curvilinear variation of an abstract function.

Science cannot resolve this dualism completely, because in objective study the seer and the seen must remain different, no

matter how "inextricably commingled." It is only in the ultimate spiritual experience that this dualism is shed and the seer and seen become one.

The root of morality lies in the endeavour of man to realise this unity of existence, or, to put it differently, to realise his Self. For one who has experienced this unity, the practice of morality becomes as natural and effortless as the drawing of breath.

To some all this might appear to be irrelevant to the political and economic struggle. In all humanity, I would demur. All actions, personal or public, political, economic or other should have an integration and the centre of this integration must be a philosophy of life.

This leads me at once to an aspect of the task of social and economic reconstruction that both socialists and communists have neglected. Socialism and communism both lay great emphasis on material prosperity, on ever-growing production and on an ever-rising standard of living. It cannot be denied that the material wants of man must be reasonably fulfiled. And when it is realised that socialists and communists are always the advocates of the poor and downtrodden, their emphasis on material progress and happiness can be appreciated. It is also true that in poor and backward countries like India it is the main task of social reconstruction to raise quite considerably the people's standard of living. But, it would not do here or elsewhere to apotheosise material happiness and encourage an outlook on life that feeds on an insatiable hunger for material goods. There can be no peace in the minds and hearts of men, nor peace amongst men if this hunger gnaws at them continuously. That would necessarily set up an uncontrolled competition between individuals, groups and nations. Everyone would be trying to outdo his neighbour and every nation not only to catch up with other nations but to leave them all behind. In such a restless society violence and war would be endemic. All values of life would be subordinated to this overmastering desire for more Religion, art, philosophy, science would have to serve that one aim of life : to have more and still more. Equality, freedom, brotherhood would all be in danger of being submerged in a universal flood of materialism. There would be no poise in human life, no real satisfaction because the possession of more would only whet the appetite for still more.

I am aware that there have been and are quite a number of

socialists who have been aware of the danger of purely materialistic view of life, but nevertheless the main concern of socialism has been and is with the material aspects of life. The socialist or labour parties and the trade unions do not educate the people about a balanced or whole view of life. If the socialist movement became conscious of the issue I am raising, its whole attitude towards science, industrialisation, social organisation and international relations would be revolutionised.

Disciplining of the bodily appetites is essential for a moral life and the growth of the human personality and the blossoming of all human qualities and values. This is true particularly of socialist values. The socialist way of life is a way of sharing together the good things that common endeavour may make available. The more willingly this sharing is practised the less tension and coercion in society and the more of socialism. I believe that unless members of society learn to keep their wants under control, willing sharing of things may be difficult, if not impossible, and society would be bound to split into two divisions : (1) comprising those who are trying to discipline others and (2) comprising all the rest. Such a division of society always leaves the question open : who would discipline the discipliners, rule the rulers ? The examples of the communist countries and the experience of socialist governments show that the answer to this perennial question is extremely difficult. The only solution seems to be to restrict as much as possible the need and area of disciplining from above by ensuring that every member of society practices self-discipline and the values of socialism, and among other things, willingly shares and co-operates with his fellowmen.

This brings me to the very heart of the problem of sarvodaya and socialism, party-and-power politics and non-party-and-non-power politics of *rajniti* and what Vinoba has aptly called *lokniti*.

I decided to withdraw from party-and-power politics not because of disgust or sense of any personal frustration, but because it became clear to me that politics could not deliver the goods, the goods being the same old goals of equality, freedom, brotherhood, peace.

But was there an alternative to politics ? Could society by changed and reconstructed in any other manner than through the agency of the State ? Politics is but a science of the State.

There was an alternative. Mahatma Gandhi had placed it before us. But, I must admit it was not clear to me at that time.

Gandhiji had shown us an alternative to armed conflict in the course of our struggle for freedom. And we had followed him—not so much out of conviction as because his prescription had worked. Nothing succeeds like success—as the saying goes—and Gandhiji's satyagraha campaigns were topping successes in that they stirred up the people and roused them to action as nothing has done before. All competing programmes and ideologies had to accept defeat and take a back seat.

But Gandiji had no time to give a practical demonstration of his non-violent technique for changing and reconstructing society. No doubt, he had spoken and written much about it, but before he was able to put it into practice he was cruelly snatched away from our midst. Looking back, it seems clear now that he had already begun to lay the foundations of his future course of action. But, the significance of what he was doing was entirely lost upon me, as perhaps upon many others. The significance of the fact, for instance, that after having led the freedom movement to a brilliant success, he did not take power himself to use it for remaking the country in accordance with his ideals, had completely escaped me. Likewise, when he proposed that the Congress should withdraw from the field of politics and turn itself into what he called a *Lok Sevak Sangh*, the import again of that extraordinary proposal was lost upon me. Nor had the country a chance to consider that proposal dispassionately, because the grief and anxiety into which it was plunged were too overpowering for clear thought. Besides, all eyes were turned to those who, in the absence of the ship's captain, were expected to steer her to safety. And from them not a word came about the Master's "last will and testament." On top of it all, when it was seen that every one of Gandiji's political colleagues had taken to the traditional path of politics, it could not even be suspected that there was in Gandhism an alternative to the method of party and power.

A question might be raised here why it should ever be suspected that Gandhiji, who had devoted his whole life to politics, should have at all thought in items of an alternative to it. In my humble opinion Gandhiji never had anything to do with politics in the sense I am considering here. The movement for freedom

that Gandhiji led was "political" in the sense that its goal was the national independence of India; it was not "politics" in the sense that it was a struggle for power for any particular party. If its aim was power, it was power for the entire Indian people, including those who separated to form Pakistan and for the parties that existed, or were to be formed in the future in both Indias. Gandhiji was not a party leader fighting and manoeuvring for power for his party. Had it been so it could never have occurred to him to ask the Congress to quit the field of power politics. He was a national leader fighting for the freedom of his country : nay, he was a world leader of humanity working to free his fellow men from bondage. The Indian freedom movement was a people's movement par excellence. It was not *rajniti* (politics of the State) but *lokniti* (politics of the people).

Be that as it may, the questions raised by politics kept humming in my head, leaving me dissatisfied and urging me to seek an alternative. The party system, with the corroding and corrupting struggle for power inherent in it, disturbed me more and more. I saw how parties backed by finance, organisation and the means of propaganda could impose themselves on the people; how people's rule became in effect party rule; how party rule in turn became the rule of a caucus or coterie; how democracy was reduced to mere casting of votes; how even this right of vote was restricted severely by the system of powerful parties setting up their candidates from whom alone, for all practical purposes, the voters had to make their choice; how even this limited choice was made unreal by the fact that the issues posed before the electorate were by and large incomprehensible to it.

The party system as I saw it was emasculating the people. It did not function so as to develop their strength and initiative, nor to help them establish their self-rule and to manage their affairs themselves. All that the parties were concerned with was to capture power for themselves so as to rule over the people, no doubt, with their consent ! The party system, so it appeared to me, was seeking to reduce the people to the position of sheep whose only function of sovereighty would be to choose periodically the shepherds who would look after their welfare ! This to me did not speil freedom—the freedom, the swaraj, for which I had fought and for which the people of this country had fought.

Democratic socialists had no doubt talked vaguely of

decentralisation of power, of the four-pillar state and of other similar concepts. But in practice I found that their entire concern was, as still is, with the capture of power. They seem to believe that even decentralisation of power was possible only after the present centres of power had been conquered so that decentralisation and de-institutionalisation could then be legislated into being. They do not see the absurdity of this procedure. Decentralisation cannot be affected by handing down power from above to people who have been politically emasculated and whose capacity for self-rule has been thwarted, if not destroyed by the party system and concentration of power at the top. Today village panchayats are being established according to laws made in the *Vidhan Sabhas*. These are not true panchayats, not what Gandhiji understood by *gram raj*. In Gandhiji's pregnant words the panchayat "can function only under a law of its own making." The capacity to self-regulate the life of the community must be created and not bestowed from above in the name of decentralisation. The process must be started from the bottom. A programme of self-rule and self-management must be placed before the people, and by a constructive, non-partisan approach they must be helped to translate it into practice. It is clear now that it was in order to undertake such a progromme on a nation-wide scale that Gandhiji was thinking of converting the Congress into a non-partisan *Lok Sevek Sangh*. It is exactly this task Vinobaji has undertaken. Naturally, he did not have the lead in the race that Gandhiji would have had, but it is remarkable that in the brief span of six years he has succeeded in creating a movement of social revolution and reconstruction from below as well as a new band of *lok sevaks* to assist in the process.

As a way out of the faults and failures of the party system, I toyed for some time with the idea of a co-operative, rather than a competitive, system of parties. I realised, however, that in the first place, there was no climate for such a political experiment, and in the second place, the experiment could not succeed within the given framework of struggle for power and the system of parliamentary domocracy, except for limited purposes and limited periods. I still believe, however, that given the psychological climate for it such a political experiment might yet be made. But for that the frame of reference will have to be changed from parliamentary democracy to something different. Be that as it may, my

disenchantment with the party system kept on urging me to seek a better substitute for it. Gandhiji's non-partisan constructive approach towards people's self-rule seemed to offer one hopeful line of exploration.

As questioning about politics was not confined to the party system alone, fundamental questions arose in my mind as to the place and role of the State in human society, particularly in relation to the goals of social life that had fixed themselves before me. Perhaps my schooling in Marxism, with its ideals of a stateless society, made these questions more pointed and troublesome. Though, I had given up the basic postulates of Marxism, because they did not promise to lead me to my goals, I continued to feel strongly that human freedom could be fully and wholly realised only in a stateless society. I was, and am, not sure if the State would ever wither away completely. But I am sure that it is one of the noblest goals of social endeavour to ensure that the powers and functions and spheres of the State are reduced as far as possible. I became as this time, and still am, an ardent believer, like Gandhiji, in the maxim that the government was the best that governed the least. The test of human evolution for me became man's ability to live in amity, justice and co-operation with his fellow men without outward restraints of any kind. That is why I have considered the human and social problems to be at bottom a moral problem

With this coneeption of the role and place of the State in society at the back of my mind, I viewed with very deep apprehension the march of the State to greater and greater glory. Democratic socialists, communists, as well as welfarists (not to speak of the fascists), are all statists. They all hope to bring about their own variety of the millenium by first mastering and then adding to the powers and functions of the State.

The bourgeois State had monopoly of political power. The socialist State threatens to add to that monopoly of economic power. Such a great concentration of power would require equal, if not greater, power to control and keep it in check. There would be no such power at hand in a socialist society. Paper constitutions could hardly be expected to guarantee freedom and sovereignty to the citizen. The economic and political bureaucracy would be so strong and in occupation of such vantage points that the liberties and rights of the people, as well as their bread,

would be entirely at its mercy.

I am aware that democratic socialists are conscious of these dangers and are trying to devise "checks and balances." The independent trade unions are supposed to be a great bulwark of freedom, though it is recognised that the great trade unions are themselves becoming more and more ridden with bureaucracy. Plans for industrial democracy and public accountability for State enterprises have been drawn up. Consumers' associations and co-operative of all kinds are rightly supposed to function as balancing and restraining factors. Even decentralization of authority and functions has figured of late in socilist thinking. But after all is said and done the democratic socialist State remains a Leviathan that will sit heavily on the freedom of the people.

The only remedy for this that I could think of took me farther to sarvodaya, The remedy obviously is, as I have said obove in the context of internal and external discipline, to make it possible for the people to do without the State as far as practicable and to run their affairs themselves directly. Speaking as a socialist, I would put it thus : the remedy is to create and develop forms of socialist living through the voluntary endeavour of the people rather than seek to establish socialism by the use of the power of the State. In other words the remedy is to establish people's socialism rather than State socialism. Sarvodays is people's socialism. Wheather even socialist agrees or not with sarvodaya, he should agree that the more of people's or voluntary socialism and the less of State-enforced socialism, the fuller and more real the socialism. Unfortunately, there are very few socialists who are giving much attention to people's socialism. Speaking of British Socialists, Jack Bailey, the British Co-operative leader says : "In Britain the concentration of most socialists upon the capture and use of State power has tended to blind them to the validity of non-State forms of socialism." (Quoted by Harold Compbell in *Socialist Commentary*, July 1957). What is true of Britain is true of all the world. It should be obvious that in order to develop non-State forms of socialism, it should be unnecessary for any one to function as a party or to engage in a struggle for the capture of power. Both power and party have no relevance in this context. What is needed rather is a band of selfless workers prepared to live and move in the midst of the people and help them to reorganise their lives on a self-reliant and self-governing basis. One cannot

help being reminded here of Gandhiji's *Lok Sevak Sangh* again.

The question now arises, what will be the form of that society in which it will be possible for the people to run their affairs directly and develop all those values of life that characterise a socialist society : co-operation, self-discipline, sense of responsibillty ? This is a question to which socilists have paid the least attention so far. Human society has so grown that we have the complex industrial civilisation of today, with great human forests that are called cities, with economic and social relationships that are utteraly impersonal and non-lifegiving, with modes of work that are irk-some and bereft of joy and opportunities of creativity and that have the sole criterion of productivity and efficiency to recommend them. Science has turned the whole world into a neighbourhood, but man has created a civilisation that has turned even neighbours into strangers. Such a complex and top heavy society cannot but be a heaven for bureaucarts, managers, technocrats, statists. Such a society cannot be a home for brothers to live together as brothers. Socilists, in the name of science, production, efficiency, standard of living and other hallowed shibboleths have accepted this whole Frankenstein of a society—lock, stock and barrel—and hope, by adding public ownership to it to make it socialist. I submit that in such a society the very breath of socialism would be hard to draw. Self-government, self-management, mutual co-operation and sharing, equality freedom, brotherhood—all could be practised and developed for better if men lived in small communities. This is beginning to be realised by forward-looking thinkers even in the West.

Further, man is a product of both nature and culture. So for his balanced growth it is necessary that a harmonious blend between the two is affected. This blending, in spite of parks and green avenues, is not possible in such centres of modern civilisation as London, Paris, New York, Moscow. As a result, modern man's development is warped and onesided. A harmonious blending of nature and culture is possible only in comparatively smaller communities. Let me quote Aldous Huxley from his *Science, Liberty and Peace* :

Now it seems pretty obvious that man's psychological, to say nothing of his spiritual, needs cannot be fulfilled unless, first, he has a fair measure of personal independence and personal responsibility within and toward a self-governing group, unless, secondly,

his work possesses a certain aesthetic value and human significance, and unless, in the third place, he is related to his natural environment in some organic, rooted and symbiotic way.

It was for these reasons that Gandhiji insisted that the Indian village and village self-government (*gram raj*) were the foundations for his picture of society—the society of equal and free human beings living as brothers in peace.

Living in small communities and producing mostly for self or local consumption on small machines may be regarded by some as setting the hand of science backwards Science and centralised large-scale production and large conglomerations of human habitations are thought to go necessarily together. Nothing could be more absurd. Science is of two kinds : (a) pure science and (b) applied science. I would call pure science alone science and the other technology. Now, the applications of science does not depend upon science itself but upon the character of society. Large-scale, big machine production was profitable to the money-makers, so technology took the course of the particular type of production. The money-makers were the dominant class in society and their will had to be done. Governments also—irrespective of ideologies—preferred centralised, big-scale production, because that was necessary for war making (or defence, if you please) and—on less important—because it also concentrated great economic, and therefore, political power in their hands. Thus governments and profiteers combined to create the Frankenstein of modern society. Poor science had no say in the matter. Rather, had the scientists had their way, many of them, I believe, would be happy to smash many of the engines of production and destruction that their discoveries had helped to create. But suppose society had pursued not the aims of power, profit and war, but of peace, goodwill, co-operation, freedom and brotherhood, science could have been equally applied to evolve the suitable technology. If that were to happen. it would be not regression of science, but progression in a creative rather than destructive direction. It should be pointed out that atomic energy has made more possible than ever before the dispersal of production and the development of small technology, that is, technology appropriate to production in small units and by small-sized machinery. Let me quote Huxley again :

My own view, which is essentially that of the decentralists, is

that so long as the results of pure science are applied for the purpose of making our system of mass producing and mass distributing industry more expensively elaborate and more highly specialised there can be nothing but ever greater centralisation of power in ever fewer hands. And the corollary of this centralisation of economic and political power is progressive loss by the masses of their civil liberties, their personal independence and their opportunities for self-government. But here we must note that there is nothing in the results of disinterested scientific research which makes it invitable that they should be applied for the benefit of centralised finance, industry and government. If inventors and technicians so chose, they could just as well apply the results of pure science for the purpose increasing the economic self-sufficiency and consequently the political independence of small owners, working either on their own or in co-operative groups, concerned not with mass distribution, but with subsistence and the supply of a local market. The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; and the same is true of applied science.

I am not suggesting that the whole picture of this new society is clear to any one or that all its problems have been thought out and resolved. How, for instance, would these small self-reliant, self-governing communities be related together is a major question that immediately springs to the mind. There is, of course, Gandhiji's grand conception before us :

In this structure, composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramed with apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual, always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Gandhiji's words give us direction, but much thought and experience will be necessary before the picture becomes more clear. However, one warning must be sounded. While it is undoubted that life in small communities, permitting and promoting personal relationships, will be more suited to the realisation of sarvodaya ideals, it should not be imagined that small communities, by virtue merely of their size, will necessarily be sarvodaya communities.

Had that been so, we would have encountered sarvodaya in every village of India today. The outward forms of living have relevance only when the inward forms are given. Men must understand and accept the sarvodaya view of life before they can proceed to investigate in what environment and framework they could live that life best.

The fear is often expressed if self-reliant and self-governing communities will hold together and the unity and integrity of the nation will abide. In a sarvodaya world society the present nation States have no place. The sarvodaya view is a world view, and the individval standing at the centre of Gandhiji's oceanic circle is a world citizen. But let us leave for the present the world picture of sarvodaya. There is no reason to suppose why self-governing small communities will be hostile to one another or isolationist or selfish in their inter-relationship. If the internal life of a community is laid on sound foundations, its external life cannot but be equally sound.

THE DYNAMICS OF SARVODAYA

During Gandhiji's life time, in spite of the fact that I was gradually drawing close to him, as I have recounted above, I could not see how this non-violent technique could bring about a social revolution. I had seen how that technique worked during the national revolution, but how feudalism and capitalism could be abolished by the same means and a new society created was not at all clear to me. I had, no doubt, read Gandhiji's writings on revolution through change of heart But in the absence of a direct demonstration, those ideas seemed impractical in the extreme. During my Marxist days, I had written a vehement critique of the theory of trusteeship; and though I had moved considerably away from Marxism by the end of Gandhiji's life, I was not prepared to accept that trusteeship could be a social, as distinguished from individual, norm of behaviour. As I have indicated above, Gandhiji, soon after independence, was evolving in his mind a national programme for launching upon the second and greater phase of his unique career. His proposal to transform the Congress organisation which he had fashioned as a non-violent army of freedom into a *Lok Sevak Sangh* was no doubt a bold stroke of genius. But, as I have said earlier, its significance was entirely lost

upon me. So, having already rejected the use of violence under democratic conditions as counter-revolutionary, I was naturally left only with the traditional socialist methods of bringing about the social revolution. At the same time the gaping inadequacies of that method and the poor quality of the results achieved through it—some of which I have discussed above—put me in a questioning mood.

I was in this frame of mind when an event of great significance took place. In a remote village of Telengana, *Bhoodan* was born. My first reaction to the event was of the usual sort : it would born. hundreds of years in this manner to redistribute all the land in the country, I thought. But there were two factors in the situation which arrested my attention and forced me to give it serious thought. One was the author himself of *Bhoodan*. I had known Vinoba for years and often when I had occasion to visit Wardha, I went specially to see him. I always found him unusually stimulating and original. Some of his writings that I had read had an exhilarating freshness. I recalled how Gandhiji had selected him as the first satyagrahi in 1941. I remembered again his clearsighted lead at the first conference of Gandhian constructive and political workers convened at Wardha after Gandhiji's death. When a person like Vinoba, I theught, had started something, it could not just be brushed aside as a stunt or futile gesture. The other factor was the steady growth of the movement. It was found that whenever and whereever a serious band of workers took it up, it produced results. The method was not impractical. It appeared that if as much effort was put behind it as behind the usual political movements, the results would be for quicker and sounder.

About this time, the old Socialist Party had decided that it should give its urgent attention to the question of redistribution of land which it considered to be the most vital question of economic reform before the country. In a resolution this subject which I had sponsored, the Panchmarhi Party Conference (1952) had made a brief reference to *Bhoodan*, welcoming it and promising support. Some time afterwards, I went to see Vinoba when he was in the Banda district of U.P., to discuss this question of land redistribution. I saw that he was serious about the problem and his economic outlook was revolutionary in a basic way. I decided to join Vinoba's movement. But I had a three weeks' fast impending,

which completed, I plunged into the bhoodan "Ganga" in the Gaya district of Bihar. My brief experience was exhilarating beyond expectation. Within a week nearly seven thousand acres of land were obtained as gifts—most of them spontaneous and from small holders—announced at my meetings.

As the movement progressed it took on new forms. Already in 1952 it had disclosed an aspect which was startlingly attractive. In the village Mangroth of the district of Hamirpur in U.P. *gramdan* had been announced. Vinoba has a great talent for coining words and investing old words with new meanings. Thus *dan* in his vocabulary does not mean gift, but "sharing together." That is his rendering of Shankar's definition, *danam sam vibhagah*, *Gramdan* was equitable sharing together of the lands of the village by the people of the village. *Bhoodan* signified distribution of land to the landless, *gramdan*, on the other hand, meant communisation of the land : institution of community, in place of individual, ownership of land. It became evident that *bhoodan* had within it the germ of total agrarian revolution.

And how beautiful a revolution, how different from all others ! Private ownership of land (including *zamindari* and peasant proprietorship) has been abolished in other ways in other countries; namely, by the compulsion of law or direct physical violence. The social resultants of these "revolutions" have been uniformly unhappy—such as bitterness and hatred; misery and tyranny, growth of an agricultural bureaucracy and reduction of free peasants to the status of serfs; concentration of power and dictatorship. In the beautiful revolution of *gramdan*, ownership was not abolished by force of any kind, but freely surrendered to the community. The onward social change was accompanied by inward human change. It was an example of what Gandhiji meant by a double revolution. In place of social tensions, conflict and tyrannies, there were freedom and multual goodwill and accord, making it possible for an unprecedented output of free collective initiative and endeavour. (It may be remarked parenthetically that production of foodgrains in Mangroth has trebled in the course of a little over four years).

A little after the announcement of Mangroth gramdan I made a special trip to the village to see for myself what had happened there. What I saw opened a new vista into the future. It was thrilling to visualise the great moral, economic, political and social

revolution that would sweep over the country if Mangroth were repeated in every village. And I could find no reason to suppose that what had happened in Mangroth could not happen in all the villages of India. The people of Mangroth were by no means angels.

In due course Vinoba added a new item to his programme : *Sampattidan*. On a superficial view it appeared that this was another trick for raising contributions. In reality it was the beginning of a programme of converting proprietorship (not only of land but of all property) into what Gandhiji called trusteeship. *Sampattidan* demonstrated that the methodology of the new revolution was not restricted to the problem of land, but could be applied to the entire social field.

Vinoba's movement thus supplied an answer to the question that I had long been asking : Could Gandhijs's philosophy offer a practical method to accomplish the special revolution ? In a brilliant extension and development of Gandhiji's work, Vinoba demonstrated that there was such a method.

As I see it, it is a two-pronged method. One prong of it is a mass campaign of what Gandhiji termed "conversion". In other words, a widespred campaign is launched to persuade men—irrespective of class, creed and other differences—to give up those ideas, ways and values of life that have been found to be wrong and harmful and to accept in their place certain others. Thus, a revolution in ideas and values is set in motion. At the same time, the new values and ideas are so chosen that they have a direct bearing on some major social problem and their acceptance and practice are expected to lead to a solution of that problem and incidentally to a radical change in society. The change, let it be emphasised, takes place as a result of individuals beginning here now to live the values of the future society. Other revolutions failed because those who brought them about used means that were inconsistent with their ends. For instance, if the end was a stateless society, the means were the coercive powers of the State itself; if the end was brotherhood, a fratricidal war amongst brothers, called class-war, was the means used; or, again, if the end was rooting out of selfishness as the driving force in life, the selfishness of certain sections of society was used as the driving force for the social revolution. In the sarvodaya method of revolution the ends and means become one. If in the new social order property is to

belong to society and the property-owner is to be a mere trustee, the revolution begins by individuals converting themselves here and now into trustees.

Another important feature of the method is that though the new ideas and values appear difficult to practise, a phased programme is so contrived that even ordinary persons are able by easy steps to advance towards the seemingly difficult goal. To illustrate, Vinoba through his movement is propagating the idea that we are only trustees of "our" properties and therefore entitled to no more than what society gives us as our share. Therefore, he is exhorting us to live as Trustees and share what we have with others. In the present circumstances this appears to be a very difficult road to travel. Therefore, Vinoba has made the pilgrim's journey easy by asking him first to share only a small part of his possessions. Even this should have been difficult for the individual if he were asked to do it alone. The moral life is difficult to live in the midest of immorality. It requires greater effort and higher moral resources. But when all around one are making a similar effort, it becomes easy even for weak characters to raise themselves. Therefore, the programme of "conversion," though directed to the individual, has a mass character; that is to say, whole groups and masses of men are sought to be touched and moved by it.

The other prong of the method is to devise a programme of self-help and self-government through which men—first those living in small communities—may learn to manage their own affairs and, moved by the new ideas and values, co-operate together to create new institutions and forms of social life. To illustrate, side by side with *bhoodan* there is the programme of production for self and local consumption; of *gramdan*, which is a new ararian economic order; and of *gramswaraj*, which is village self-government. The revolution in ideas as represented by *Bhoodan*, *Sampattidan* and *Gramdan* and the revolution in the outward organisation of society represented by community ownership of land and community self-government together constitute a full revolutionary programme that is different both from revolutions of violence and revolutions made by law.

This is a new technique of which the world has had no experience yet. It is common for new ideas to be treated with suspicion and reserve. But for us in India who have had the privilege of witnessing the miracle of national freedom being won with radically

new ideas and methods, which too had been met first with doubt and derision, it should not be difficult to appropriate the new ideas and methods of Vinoba that are after all in the nature of an extension and development of the earlier ones used by the Father of the Nation. We in India have also the additional privilege, as one of the younger nations of today, of being in a position to benefit from the successess and failures of others.

After the achievement of freedom it was perhaps natural for public spirited persons to rush towards the newly conquered seats of power in order to be able to serve the country, but I hope in the last ten years there has been enough experience accumulated about the inadequacy and futility of service through power for large numbers of patriotic individuals to rally under the banner of sarvodaya. Already hundreds of *satyagrahi lok sevaks* have rallied to that banner. There is no need for hundreds of thousands of such.

CONCLUSION

I hope it can now be seen why I decided to withdraw from politics. I hope also that it will be appreciated that it was not a negative decision. It was not the ugliness of politics that repelled me, but the attraction of the new politics of sarvodaya that drew me. For, as I have tried to show above, sarvodaya also has its politics. But it is politics of a different kind : politics of the people as I have called it, as distinct from the politics of party and power, *lokniti* as distinct from *rajniti*. The politics of sarvodaya can have no party and no concern with power. Rahter, its aim will be to see that all centres of power are abolished. The more this new politics grows the more the old politics shrinks. A real withering away of the State !

I should add that there can be no question of any hostility between *rajniti* and *lokniti*, nor can the two be kept apart as two unmixable castes. *Lokniti* is but the child of *rajniti*. Between the two there must be constant contact and co-operation. Democratic *rajniti* cannot possibly ever resist the idea that the people should practise self-government as far as possible. All democratic parties should, by definition, be prepared, nay, anxious to hand over power to the people as soon as possible, in the same manner as every good father is anxious to hand over to his sons when they are of

age. If pressure of work permits me, I shall try some time later to place before the country my humble suggestions in regard to the evolution of our polity from *rajniti* and *lokniti*.

I should also add that though all my energies would be bent towards developing *lokniti*, I shall not shut my eyes to what happens in the sphere of *rajniti*. For good or ill, *rajniti* does to some extent influence the lives of the people. It shall be my concern from the outside to see that influence is as salutary as possible. I am aware of the risks involved in that, the risk, for instance, of being misunderstood and charged with "playing politics." I would regret very much if anything like that happened. But perhaps one cannot always avoid misunderstandings in public life. I wish, however, to assure everybody that for my part I cannot but view every issue from a detached non-partisan point. If my intervention at any time causes annoyance to any one, the misfortune will be entirely mine.

6

NEW DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

You are all aware of the new technique that Mahatma Gandhi used in his struggle against the British power. That was a revolutionary departure from the normal technique of revolution, the like of which had not been witnessed before in history. You know that the weapons Gandhiji used were those of love and self-suffering. Instead of preaching hatered and violence, he preached love. Instead of inflicting suffering, he invited it. History is now a witness to great success of that unique experiment.

It is my humble submission that that experiment was not just a flash in the pan of history, but a beacon light in the darkness. I submit further that that light should be of particular interest to us socialists, because we too are trying to find a way out of the darkness.

Socialism has placed before mankind noble ideals of equality, freedom and fellowship; of peace and international brotherhood. But these ideals are yet distant dreams. The assumption of earlier days that once the socialists were in power, all the dreams would come true has proved to be too facile. And a real danger has arisen of the ideals and principles being forgotten or being given a back seat and the means or the doctrines being mistaken for the former. Socialists are faced with this danger everywhere but more so in Asia. A recent study which I consider to be of great significance

*Text of Address to the Second Asian Socialist Conference held in Bombay.

made by the Socialist Union of Great Britain and published as *Twentieth Century Socialism* sums up this danger for Western socialism in these words :

> The ultimate source of the confusion and division which afflicts socialism today is that its true ends are being forgotten. The doctrinaires have deified the means that were once thought to bring certain salvation into ends in themselves. For them socialism is measured in terms of more public enterprise, more planning, more money spent on social services – irrespective of the results. The empiricists, on the other hand, in becoming more realistic about the choice of means, have scaled down their ends to nothing more than the immediately acceptable. In neither viewpoint is there any room for the ideals which have been the one enduring foundation of the socialist faith.

In the communist countries, too, we find the same process at work. There dictatorship is being equated with democracy, state capitalism with socialism, colonialism and national expensionism with world revolution. After forty years of revolution and socialist reconstruction, equality and freedom, the most cherished values of socialism, lie trampled underfoot. In Asia, it seems to me that there are two more dangers facing the socialist movement. One, that we might take only a negative view of socialism and regard our task as having been fulfilled if we succeeded in destroying feudalism and nascent capitalism. Two, that socialism might be equated with mere economic growth. All our countries, except Japan, are backward economically and many are desperately poor. Naturally, therefore, our attention goes first of all to the problem of economic growth. There is nothing wrong in that, but the mischief starts when we begin measuring 'Socialist achievements' in terms of tons of steel and kilowatts of electricity. Economic growth, even rapid economic growth, is known to have occurred both under capitalism and fascism. Mere economic development is not a measure of socialism. I do not wish to suggest that it is not the business of socialists to see that more wealth is produced. What I wish to emphasise is the danger of equating socialism with economic development and of sacrificing the values of socialism at the altar of that development. Another aspect of this danger is that when the values are pushed into the background, the production statistics

take the front seats. The next step towards regimentation and dictatorship is then a matter of course. Because all the expert then find it easy to prove that economic growth particularly in a backward country connot be rapid enough unless the State gathered into its hands adequate powers. We Asian socialists are for ever pointing our fingers at communist totalitarianism, but I am afraid if we do not distinguish between socialism and mere economic progress we also might be treading the same path.

I am sure every one of you here is aware of these dangers. The question is how are we going to fight these dangers. We in Asia are fortunate in that we have the experience of our socialist comrades in the West and also of the communists in the East before us. We can profit from their experience and learn from their successes and failures. But I am afraid we, too, instead of discovering new roads to the ideals, are getting caught in the theories, the institutions and organizations. I for one do not find any fresh approach to the problem. A great deal of thinking undoubtedly is going on, but all of it within the same old framework of socialist thought. The main, if not the whole, emphasis is still being placed on the control and use of the power of the State. Everywhere socialists are organized in political parties which are attempting to seize power and hoping thereafter to build a new society. The parties already in power are actually engaged in that task. But as I have said before, the ideals of socialism remain far in the distance.

The reason seems to me to be a wrong approach to these ideals. All of us agree that socialism is a way of life, an attitude of mind, a certain ethical behaviour. What is not so universally recognized is that such a way of life, attitude, behaviour, cannot be imposed from above by dictates of the government or by merely nationalizing industry and abolishing capitalism. Construction of a socialist society is fundamentally construction of a new type of human being. The importance of such human reconstruction is admitted on all sides, but I am afraid no sooner is the admission made than it is forgotten and every one joins the race to get on the State wagon. Clearly if human reconstruction is the key to socialist reconstruction and if that is beyond the scope of the State, the emphasis in the socialist movement must change from political action to such work of reconstruction. The question is—and I think it is the most important question for socialism—how is such

human reconstruction possible? By eduction, some may reply. Education, no doubt, can play a valuable part, but it is not an adequate answer to the question. What is needed is a socialist movement, a mass movement, of human reconstruction. Such a movement, to my mind, would be the real socialist movement. Such a movement, obviously, will be non-political in the sense that its aim will not be the capture of the State, because the State will be irrelevant to its purpose, namely, the remaking of man.

What will the dynamics of such a movement be? So far the dynamics of social change has been the conflict of self-interests. The self-interest of labour has been juxtaposed with the self-interest of capital, the intermediary interests choosing their side according to their own view of the main conflict. Labour actuated by self-interest wishes to create a different social order in which it is assumed selfishness will not rule the lives of men. Here you have a fundamental contradiction. As the Hindi proverb says, "you cannot plant a thorn tree and expect it to bear mangoes".

I think, therefore, that a new dynamics has to be found in consonance with the ultimate values of socialism. The reason the ideals of socialism are eluding the socialist movement is that the approach to them is faulty. Socialism has been defined in various ways. I would like to define a socialist society as one in which the individual is prepared voluntarily to subordinate his own interest to the larger interest of society. The key word in this definition is the word voluntary. Men may be forced in various ways to subordinate their interest to the interest of others, but as there is force needed to do so, socialism would be limited, even distorted, maybe even denied. Equality, freedom and fellowship can never become realities unless the moral evolution of the individual has been such that he is voluntarily prepared to limit his wants and his freedom in the interest of his fellow human beings. A socialist society cannot be built up if every individual wants and hankers after more and more for himself. Unless the individual learns the lesson of self-control and adopts a way of life based on such control, strife between man and man and between his groups classes and nations, is bound to continue. Science has placed in the hands of man the means of an ample life. In the midst of this possibility of universal happiness there is universal misery because of man's covetousness, his greed, his selfisnness. The world is plagued by wars—cold and shooting wars—and threatened with

total destruction, not because there is not enough for everyone, but because everyone wants the most for himself. I fear that unless the moral development of man is caught up with his scientific and technological development, his fate is pretty tightly sealed

Therefore, what is needed is not a system of dynamics based on a conflict of interests, but one that is based on the values of the society that we all wish to create. What is needed is not so much a movement for the capture of power, but a movement that required that those who participated in it should begin here and now to live the new way of life. Let those who believe in the ideals and values of socialism begin to live them now. If we believe in equality, for instance, let us being to practise it. Real equality is not possible, to my mind, unless members of society live according to that noble Marxian ideal, 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his needs.' No State can force the individual to live in accordance with this ideal. It can be put into practice only if it is willingly accepted by the community. Therefore, let those who believe in equality proceed to live accordingly Equality does not consist in taking from the rich and distributing. to the poor. If the poor tried to establish equality by merely distributing the wealth of the wealthy amongst themselves, without accepting the philosophy of life behind it, they would soon recreate different forms of inequality amongst themselves. And if the poor accepted the new philosophy and practised it in their own lives and if they did it on a mass scale, the rich would not remain behind. Likewise with the other values and ideals of socialism.

At this stage I shall be reminded of the various efforts made in Europe and America of establishing little colonies whose members lived according to the ideals of socialism. They failed because they were limited in scope and area; they were little islands in the hostile ocean of capitalism. I believe Mahatma Gandhi discovered a way of developing mass movements through internal change in man, that is to say, mass moral revolution. The world would be justified in expecting India to set an example in this respect. But, I am sorry to say that while Gandhiji's name is on the lips of everyone here, our eyes are turned eagerly to others. The lure of power is too great, and everyone who wants to do anything for his country wants to get to the seats of power. The only exception, as you all know perhaps, is Vinoba Bhave and the small group of workers around him. His Bhoodan movement, of

which you might have heard something, is an experiment in the new social dynamics of which I have been speaking. He is trying to develop a mass movement—and he has largely succeed in it—for persuading people to live a life of sharing and to renounce the nation of individual ownership of property. Wealth can be distributed by law, but shared only voluntarily. Distribution of wealth may be an uncertain step towards socialism, but sharing of wealth is real and full socialism.

7

PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL WORK*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

I am a social worker myself, a Gandhian social worker, though not what is called a "professional social worker"; that is, one who has been trained for his profession of social work. But I fully agree with the President that training is absolutely necessary. At the same time I would stress that something more is necessary : a revolutionary outlook and revolutionary programme of social action and change. This was recognised at a joint seminar, which I was instrumental in convening, a Gandhian workers and professional social workers. Some of you might have come across the report of that seminar published by the Gandhian Institute of Studies under the title : *A Philosophy of Social Work.*

Mahatma Gandhi, being a social revolutionary went perhaps farthest in conceiving of social service as an instrument of social revolution and social reconstruction. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough after Independence to give practical shape to his conception.

I am sure, you would know that after independence. Gandhiji wanted to create a great organisation of social workers or the people's servants, which he propsed to call the "Lok Sevak Sangh." You will find this idea propounded in the document known as Mahatma Gandhi's "Last Will and Testament" published in Shri Pyarelal's *Mahatma Gandhi : The Last Phase* (Vol. II).

* Convocation Address at the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management, Calcutta on 3 March, 1970.

Gandhiji was thinking of this organisation of servants of the people as the carriers of his revolutionary message, as the agents of a people's revolution and as the architects of a new social order which he called '*Sarvodaya*'. The means that he wanted to employ were those of persuasion and social education, of service and constructive action, and if need be, of non-violent non-co-operation and resistance. He did not think that he would achieve his revolutionary purpose through the power of the State, though he was not averse to using that power when needed He knew that a democratic State has its severe limitations in the matter of bringing about fundamental changes in the social order. Laws can be passed, plans can be devised; but unless people's ideas are changed, unless there is people's voluntary participation in the process of change, whatever the State might do cannot go very far. I need not remind you of how many laws have been enacted in our country to bestow some benefit upon those who are under-privileged and exploited and with what results.

What has happened to the constitutional abolition of untouchability; to the many land reforms, especially in the ex-zamindari States; to the laws regulating prices, tax on incomes, minimum wages, maximum money-lending rates of interest, tenurial security for share-croppers, etc. I have already spoken to you of the limitations of natonaliisation of enterprise Mrs Gandhi's Government is stressing for all it is worth the urgent need for implementing all these laws. But can they ever be fully implemented ?

Gandhiji realised all this and therefore believed that revolution was an educative process. Nobody can be educated by violence. You can destroy things, you can hardly construt things by violence. And that is why violent revolutions, though successful in destroying the old social order are finding it difficult to construct the new social order of their conception. Where is socialism today ? Where is communism ? They are but distant goals.

DECENTRALISATION OF URBAN ADMINISTRATION

Now a word about 'Urban Administration.' I know little about this subject, but still venture to make two points for your considerations.

Take the Calcutta Corporation. It is possible for it to administer the municipal affairs of such a vast sprawling city ? Do

you think that administration carried on from one centre over such a large area makes sense ? Can it be effective ? I believe that at the urban, just as at the rural level, there should be participation by the people in the management of the affairs of the city, town or village, that is one level at least, where direct democracy should be made possible. That is a cardinal principle which I hold. I have faith in the common people. Let us give them a chance. In other words, I am pleading for the decentralisation of urban administration London, as you know, is divided into counties that have their own autonomous councils and Mayors under large Corporation, presided over by the Lord Mayor. I found the same thing in West Berlin, with one Governing Mayor and several locality Mayors. Democracy, to me, does not mean merely the right to choose one's representatives, but also the right of direct participation in management and governance at all possible levels : at the community level at the level of the factory, the office, the institution.

My second point is about the optimum size of the city. None of us in this country—certainly not those who are in power or in the Planning Commission—are concerning themselves with the question of the size of our cities. A city of the size of Calcutta is an absolute scandal. And there seems to be no limit to its growth. I do not think human beings should be herded together in the fashion as they have been in this city, or for that matter, in any other of our great cities. One hears a lot about urban planning, but all that is allowed to remain on paper. In this, as in most other things, we are imitating the West. But, it is time now that we learn from their mistakes. It is not necessary that first we blindly follow in their footsteps, and then when we come to confront the problems that they are confronting today, borrow from them the remedies It is much wiser to learn from their experience and take care to avoid their mistakes. In the West too, as I am sure you know, social thinkers are seriously concerned over the problem of urban growth.

Man is a child of nature as well as a social animal. Therefore, for self-fulfilment he needs to be near mother nature and to be in communication with fellow-men. In the big cities he is separated from nature and surrounded by jungles of cement and steel, unless he is well-to-do and can affort to flee to his green suburb or garden villa. In those cities also community is an invariable casualty. The

result is human and social disorder of every kind. The social workers rush to apply the remedy. I find that too ridiculous for words. The optimum size to which a city should be allowed to grow should, therefore, be a matter of serious concern, among others, the urban administrators.

I personally think that the optimum population of a city should not go beyond five hundred thousand souls. The rest housing are, roads, schools, hospitals, parks, office areas, factory areas could be worked out by town, planners. I concede that the existing cities, Calcutta for example, cannot be split in separate smaller cities. But, surely, there is going to be further industrialisation in West Bengal. Cannot that be so planned that smaller industrial towns and cities are spread widely over the whole State ? Even Calcutta, I am sure, can be replanned and whole areas of it re-located and re-built.

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ASPECTS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

The kind of social model that we, in the Gandhian movement are trying to construct, and the means we are using, are so different at once from those found in the "Free" as well as the "Socialist" countries that for most social scientists, not to speak of politicians and administrators, we are just wasting our time, or are a bunch of cranks. I know only too well that the favoured social models for the elite of this country are those of Free Enterprise, Socialism. Communism or their mixtures in varying proportions, depending upon the individual's inclination. One should have rather thought that in view of the fact that each of these models, in their numerous varieties, and their various mixtures, have failed to realise their declared goals, even after long periods of trial, and, what is more important, failed to resolve the basic problems of human society—war, poverty equal opportunity, race, human freedom and dignity, man's spiritual growth and happiness, to mention a few—the new nations of the world, like ours, would have tried to evolve new models of social organisation.

Man by nature is imitative, the social innovator like Gandhi being an exceptional exception. But even the imitation might have had a salutary effect on what the Council for Social Development has defined as social development, had it been sincere. Our social

* Based on an address opening the building of the Council for Social Development, New Delhi.

scientists, learned in the most modern social sciences naturally employ the most sophisticated concepts and terms, which the policy-makers pick up without adequate understanding and without relating them to the reality at the ground level. It is not surprising therefore, that the picture at the operational level should be so dismal. It would not be unfair to say, though it does sound too harsh, that at the political and administrative levels fine words are used without any serious conviction and without the will to carry them into practice. We enjoy the glow of appearing modern, but inside we remain traditional and conservative. Gandhi was just the opposite : traditional and conservative in appearance and words but innovating and radical in deeds.

Though views differ, I hold that the passing away of the community in the West in the course of formation of the mass society was a major tragedy for mankind. It need not have been so had technology and industrialism not been allowed to subserve mainly, if not wholly, the interests of Profit and of Power, but been subordinated to the ethical needs and values of human society. It should be considered to be of some significance that even in the mass societies there is on a quest for community for human fellowship, for participation, for personal identity and fulfilment, for a human scale of economic, political, industrial, cultural institutions. A large part of the rebellion of the youth in the West seems to be about these things.

In a country where 82 per cent of the population still lives in something like five hundred and sixty thousand villages and other thousands of small townships, should not this question of community receive our serious attention ? These ugly, backward, neglected, dis-united and disrupted villages are often described as village communities. But they are communities only in the physical sense, and are wholly lacking in the sense of belonging together, in the spirit of community or in the habits of thinking together and acting together. The Community Development Programme was meant primarily to generate these very qualities of community life, but if that programme has proved to be a total failure in any single respect, it is in this, though it has no doubt helped in the development of agriculture, health, services, etc.

When it is said that man is a social animal, what is really meant is that he is a communal animal. He needs community for the satisfaction of his inner needs and the enrichment of his inner

life. Much of the moral and social disorder found in the world today is due, to any mind, to the collapse of the community.

The idea of community need not be limited to, the territorial community alone It can and should be extended to most, if not all, the places where men meet and work together. There can be community in industry, in the office in the institutions of education, in other similar establishments. How can community be established in these places is a matter for research and experimentation. Obviously, a great many radical changes will have to be brought about in their size, their working and management, the property and other inter-relationships within them before they can become real communities of work.

If the idea of community as a necessary milieu for human and social development is conceded, a whole field of social research and action opens up. Gandhi's concept of Gram Raj and concentric circles of community, spreading outwards to embrace the whole of humanity, which he termed the "oceanic circle" and Vinoba's *gramdan* and *Gram swaraj* are notable examples of both theory and practice in this field. Unfortunately, our social scientists show little interest in these so-called utopian ideas and experiments, and many of them have already pronounced them to have failed, though as compared to their favoured social models they are yet in their infancy. One of the lesser results of community development in the Gandhi-Vinoba sense should be that the communities take on themselves many of the social services that social scientists consider so important for social development. Rudiments of this development are already visible in some Gramdan villages

Some object to the idea of community on the ground that it places restraints on the liberty and rights of the individual. To my mind, there need be no conflict between individual interests and those of the community. Gandhi by emphasising that man was the "supreme consideration"; by insisting that the individual should be prepared to die for the community and the community for the individual separating. The rights now from duties; by insisting on the smallness of scale, on participation and consensus; by allowing the right of non violent non-co-operation to the individual; above all, by putting forth love as the principle human force; tried to remove the possibility of conflict. He may be considered to be too simplistic, but that only increases the responsibility of the social researcher to find the right answers—that is, if we are planning for social

development and not just letting things happen, as the mass society just happened and is now being regretted.

Related to this very issue, or rather arising out of it, is the question of urbanization. Our urban conglomerations are just happening and our cities are sprawling on without plan or design. The question is what should be the right environment for man to live in. Is the present megalopolis a proper habitat for him, or is it the present village ? Obviously neither. I do not wish to list here the many serious problems created by the great cities in the West, which Western sociologists are writing so much about. I merely wish to point out that it would be foolish not to take a lesson from the experience of the West, or of the East for that matter. Witness the case of Tokyo The relevant questions for us to ask are, how much larger should our great cities grow ? Where should our new cities be located and what should be their optimum size so that they may offer a satisfying human life ? What should be the future of our village communities ? Should they be allowed to decay and become in time the rural ghettos of India ? Should there be a sharp separation between village and town ? Is it not possible to preserve the virtues of village life and combine them with the virtues of the city in a new kind of urbo-rural, agro-industrial communities where man is not alienated from nature and where work could be a part of the whole life in community ? I suggest that Gandhi had some such dreams, and it is worthwhile our giving serious attention to it before it becomes too late.

There is just one more point I wish to make. It is about the neglect of the human factor in the process of social development. I need hardly emphasize, though certain political ideologues may disagree, that social development depends basically upon human development. There is a world-wide deterioration in the humanity of man. He is not only taking pleasure in killing brother man but is doing so in the most ghastly manner. And it is not only to violence of man to man that the present human deterioration is confined, but it extends to every form of conducts in every field of life : politics, education, business, personal relations, family life. There is not an educationist in the country who is not worried about the pervading immorality, because the instruments which were designed to mould character have themselves been corrupted.

There is no dearth of moral writing and preaching, but words alone cannot help. Some are inclined to reconcile themselves to the

ethical chaos on the comfortable assumption that it is a waste product of a changing society and is inevitable and has to be lived with until we reach a certain level of development. I for one do not accept this assumption. It seems to me that it very much depends upon *how* the changes are brought about.

Since Independence we have relied almost wholly on institutional changes, the various organs of the State—chiefly the legislature—acting as the agents of change. Gandhi, may I suggest again, had foreseen all this. His design to prevent this from happening was to combine change with ethical growth. He proposed to do it by making the individual the agent of change. In other words, he wanted to change society by changing individuals. He did not deny the role of the State, but he did not give it the prime place. The methods he had enunciated were constructive service, "conversion by gentle persuasion" and, when found necessary according to this philosophy of love, non-violent non-co-operation. To achieve this task he conceived of a body of hundreds of thousands of selfless servants of the people.

To have a complete picture of Gandhi's method of social development it is necessary to add that the changes he induced in the individual's attitude of mind were to be carried out in practice through a programme of action, which in turn was related to the social model he had in mind to construct, for instance, in the context of the village, the building of Gram Raj.

I may be mistaken, but it does seem to me that Gandhi's method of *social development through human development* has not received the attention it deserves from the social scientists and researchers. Now that democratic politics appears to be in the doldrums. I do expect this neglect will be remedied.

9

THE SOCIALISTS AND THE CONGRESS

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Will the socialists leave the Congress and form an opposition party, or will they merely talk about it and never make up their mind ?

This question is agitating many minds today. The 'indecision' of the socialists and my own 'vacillation' in this regard have come in for a good deal of criticism, and the vacillation has even caused amusement to our cartoonists.

First a few words by way of personal explanation. I confess that it has been a difficult issue to decide, and recent national developments have not eased the difficulty. But, though the criticism of both friends and foes has perhaps been justified, I wonder if the difficulties that beset the question have properly been appreciated. For any one who is in the habit of looking at a question from every side and who does not wish to act in a huff or haste, the subject is an extremely complicated one.

I have been accused of talking too much and too often on this subject and of saying contradictory things. It is true, I have talked much and often on this question, but not because I am a talkative person. The fact is that in the past months I have had to do a great deal of touring in connection with the organization of the Socialist Party. And during these tours, at every important meeting I was specifically asked to speak on this question. Sometimes I had to speak not only daily on this matter but several times a day.

As for self-contradiction, press reports have been entirely responsible for putting contradictory things in my mouth. Not that the pressmen deliberately wanted to misreport me. But in a long speech when a subject is dealt with in all its bearings, in my school-masterish way, and pros and cons are all discussed, it is possible for pressmen to pick out what interests or impresses them most or what is sensational. And when that is done to a balanced treatment of a subject, one-sided versions are bound to appear which seem to contradict one another. Perhaps the confusion could have been avoided if authorized versions of my speeches could have been supplied to the press. But when one speaks the same thing at half-a-dozen meetings every day, this is not easy to do.

Be that as it may, I would like here to share with the public my thoughts and hesitations on this subject. We are on the eve of a decision and I would like friends and critics alike to understand us.

What is the main issue involved in this question, within or without the Congress ? As far as we socialists are concerned, the issue is : can we build up a socialist India by remaining within the Congress or by working outside it ? In other words, can the Congress be made an instrument of socialism ?

Of course, there will be many to whom this issue will appear academic or dogmatic. They would say the main issue today is of national survival and of building up a powerful State and a prosperous country. Only the other day Sardar Patel disparaged isms, and denounced the parrot cries of socialism. We do not think there is any contradiction between the issue of isms and the issue of national survival and national construction. Rather, not only is there no contradiction, but we believe that in building up the national State and the new India a consideration of isms is essential. For we believe that on the basis of socialism alone is it possible to build up a strong and prosperous India

It is also essential to remember that those who decry isms have their own ism nonetheless; only it is the ism that is already reigning in society, so that it does not have to be talked about. When Sardar Patel decries socialism, he is defending the *status quo*, and is saying that his ism, namely, *status-quo-ism*, is superior to all others.

However, to return to the question whether the Congress

could become an instrument of socialism. There are many contradictory trends and forces in the Congress. Some of these tend to pull the Congress in the direction of socialism. There are the socialists, for instance, and a small number of other leftists. There are also many, whom one may describe as constructive Gandhians, who are in sympathy with democratic socialism. There are towering men in the Congress such as Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad, whose sympathies are the same. And above all, there is Mahatmaji who, as a servant of *daridranaryan*, is a socialist in his own original way. It was perhaps not wrong to believe that these forces together could succeed in taking the Congress and the country towards socialism. And therefore, there were many among us who did desire, and some still do, to give this course a chance.

This naturally gave offence to those of our friends who had lost faith in the Congress and grown impatient with its ways. But for those who have deep attachments with the Congress and who have given the best part of their lives to its service, it was not possible to act in impatience. And for some of us whose love and admiration for Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru are not circumscribed by Marxian dogmas or the Party line, it was, and is, not an easy task to disregard their advice.

And we thus carried on in the Congress playing our ineffective part there, and coming more and more in conflict with it and its Governments in the field of work and action.

Such a state of affairs, it is obvious, cannot long be prolonged. It is bad both for the Congress and the Socialist Party. But, it is equally obvious that the question whether the Congress can become a socialist organization will take long to answer; and even at the end no one can be sure what the answer would be.

In the meanwhile, the present situation cannot be allowed to drift. If the socialists are to continue to work within the Congress in the hope of converting it, they cannot run with the hare and hunt with the hound. It is clear to me that in that case we must disband our party and cease functioning as a body parallel to the Congress. If we did not do so, conflicts that have already appeared would so accumulate and grow that they would defeat the very purpose of our remaining within the Congress i.e., the conversion of the Congress. The Constitution Committee of the Congress as reported in the press, already seems to have recommended that no

one who is a member of another political party should be allowed to join the Congress. But even if the other side did not force the issue, it is clear to me that if we have to remain within the Congress much longer we must be there only as Congressmen. We may at the most work as an ideological group. but not function as members of an independent party, owing to it primary loyalty and allegiance. This sort of an arrangement worked when we were fighting together for freedom and might still work for a short transitional period; but it cannot indefinitely be prolonged.

And here is the rub. The Socialist Party cannot dissolve itself until it is sure that the Congress would fulfil the task of socialism. This surety is impossible to have at present.

I have spoken above of the forces that are pulling the Congress towards socialism. Let me now consider those that are barring that way, and are making its future course uncertain.

The strength of the Congress till now sprang from the fact that it was an organization of active servants of the people. In this form the Congress is fast becoming defunct. On the other hand, it is fast changing into a purely parliamentary party. When Acharya Kriplani resigned the other day, it will be recalled that the main issue he raised was : would the official or the non-official wing of the Congress dominate it ? In other words, the issue was : would the Congress become a predominantly parliamentary party or a body serving the people largely through non-official agencies and activities ? The resignation of Acharya Kriplani and the entire recent trend in the Congress show that the issue has already been settled, and all those from Mahatma Gandhi downwards, who wished to retain the old character of the Congress as a body of voluntary servants of the people, have lost the battle.

As a result of this great metamorphosis, the Congress has come to be a source of power and personal advancement. Naturally, vested interests have grown and are fast growing within it, and with them corruption and jobbery. Congress elections, beginning with enrolment of members, have become a racket and self-seeking and power politics have become rampant. This rising tide of selfish politics is the greatest barrier today in the path of the Congress advancing towards socialism. People interested in self-advancement, primarily, do not worry overmuch about ideologies and questions of social policy. They will mouth any ism that may be popular, whether Gandhism, socialism or other,

and pursue quietly their own practice.

It is necessary to understand this sudden transformation of the Congress, this rapid downfall from its lofty ideals. To my mind, this change is due mainly to the middle-class character of the Congress It is characteristic for the middle-class man to think not in terms of group but personal interest. A worker will naturally tend to unite with his fellow workers, and fight for the betterment of their collective lot. On the contrary, the man from the middle class will try to push himself up on the ladder of advancement. Most of the workers of the Congress came from the lower middle-class. Now that freedom has been won and the jail-going process is at an end, for many of them—I do not say for all because there are many happy exceptions—there are no moral urges left; and their attention now is centred on themselves and their personal interests. They are anxious now for jobs, positions and opportunities to seize the good things of life, and they are busy elbowing their way to these.

This is why the moral edifice of the Congress has so suddenly collapsed. It is not so much the fact that capitalist interests have already captured the Congress, as this fact of middle-class selfishness, that obstructs its way towards socialism It is this fact, again, that makes it easy for the vested interests to penetrate into and entrench themselves within the Congress. It is this fact, which makes even Mahatma Gandhi feel so helpless in stopping the rot that is spreading so fast. Anyone who moves about as much as I do knows that the hold of Mahatma Gandhi over the common people is greater today than ever. And yet, because the bridge of workers that he had built between himself and the people is broken, Gandhiji finds himself alone and helpless This is why Pandit Nehru too, second only to Gandhiji in moral stature and leadership, though Prime Minister, finds himself checked and thwarted at the very centre of the Government over which he presides. This is why, again, nobly-worded resolutions of the Congress remain unheeded on paper and the canker of corruption and communalism, its twin brother, eat deepar and deeper into its heart.

It is also this middle-class engrossment in self-interest that is at the bottom of much of the corruption, nepotism, and lack of policy that one finds in the Congress Governments today.

Parenthetically, I should add that any organization that bases

itself mainly on the middle class is bound to meet the same fate. The Socialist Party, for instance, cannot deliver the goods until it bases itself on the trade unions and the organized peasantry.

Looked at from this angle, the problem of converting the Congress to socialism is not merely the problem of defining its objectives and drawing up a programme, but also of converting it structurally into a labour or rather a proletarian party (embracing both the peasant and the worker). On paper, the programmes and policies of the Congress have never been reactionary. And, there is no doubt that the Committee of the A.I.C.C. that has recently been appointed will also produce a satisfactory programme. But the social interests that are at present working within the Congress will, in their pursuit of self-interest, by-pass this programme without openly opposing it. And there will always be enough crises at hand to justify this policy of do-nothing.

The question then is, can the Congress change structurally ? Can it become a real labour or toilers' party ? Here, I think, the answer is less uncertain. It does not appear to me to be possible. All the individual self-interests will join together, as they are doing today, to obstruct a change and thwart Mahatma Gandhi as well as to check socialism. Later, when the section of the middle class that is on top today gets disillusioned and finds itself in the grip of those who represent larger vested interests, it would try to change. But, it would be too late then. The Congress would have become a bourgeois party.

In view of these basic considerations, it seems futile for the socialists to continue longer within the Congress. It seems more desirable to go out and create a real socialist party, both ideologically and structurally grounded in the toiling masses of this country. Such a party is necessary also to function as an opposition party, which is so sorely needed in view of the complacency and ineptitude of the party in power and for the success of democracy.

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THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

The structure of our Party has not changed in any basic manner since its inception. The Party grew up as a group within the Congress, and even though it had an independent membership, its own constitution and rules, it never grew out of the role of being an ideological group within a great mass movement. The salient points of the Party's structure, as it took shape at the beginning and stands till today are : (1) small selected membership; (2) admission to membership depending upon fulfilment of certain work quota; (3) a probationary period for all members, scrutiny and confirmation, or rejection membership.

This structure served its purpose as long as the Party functioned mainly as an ideological group within the Congress. But can it fit the Party's new role ? The Party is not only an independent political party now : it aspires to become a party of the toiling millions, and it aspires too, by its own political action, to destroy feudalism and capitalism in India and establish of socialist society. These are not objects that a handful of persons can achieve. Unless the Party succeeds in rallying the workers, the peasants, the exploited middle classes, under its banner, unless it is able to organize them and inspire them to political action, the Party's objective shall remain unrealized. The Party must become the Party not only *for* the toilers but also *of* the toilers.

For many months past one of the slogans of the Party has

been : '*Mazdooron ki parti* : Socialist Party'; '*Kisanan ki parti* : Socialist Party', etc. The question is how can the Party become in fact, and not in theory alone, the party of peasants and workers ? If the Party is made up of a handful of socialist workers and the masses are barred from coming in, how can we be justified in claiming that we are the party of the masses ?

We constantly invite the masses to come into the Party; what value has this when we at the same time bar way ? It is obvious that the Party must expand and broaden out : it must become a mass party. It cannot do it all of a sudden, but the structural goal of the Party is fairly definite.

The thought of a mass party is disturbing to some friends. The influx of the masses is supposed to dilute the ideological purity of a party and blunt its revolutionary edge and make it too cumbrous and heavy for revolutionary action. According to such friends a revolutionary party must be a party of chosen workers. To them the structure of the communist party appears to be ideally suited to a revolutionary purpose.

In Marxist theory and common logic, there is no reason why a party that desires to serve the masses must restrict it membership to a chosen few. The more logical and natural course for it should be to include as large sections of the masses as possible. Restricted membership is no essential attribute of revolutionism. Rather, it is the resultant of special objective conditions.

In Czarist day, there were no civil liberties in Russia, and the Bolshevik Party, or its parent, the Social Democratic Party, had to function in conditions of illegality, secrecy and underground life. Under those conditions, it was physically impossible to build up a mass party Only tested members could be admitted and strict vigilance and discipline were necessary to prevent betrayal and to ensure devoted work in the face of suffering and danger.

It was not only in Russia that these organizational needs were felt and patterns found to meet them. In every country where Czarist conditions existed, revolutionary organizations followed a similar pattern. The revolutionary parties in India too did the same during British days. It was the genius of Mahatma Gandhi that in *satyagraha* he devised a revolutionary method that even under conditions of Czarism could be used openly.

Communist methods having been perfected to suit certain given conditions, it is unwise to attempt to apply them universally.

Where the civil liberties of the people are guaranteed and all the avenues for open political propaganda, organization and action are available, the methods of secret societies cannot but lead to failure. In democratic countries, communist methods have yielded meagre results.

In Great Britain, America and France, communist parties were and are legal and have functioned within the framework of democracy. In Weimar Germany too, the Communist Party functioned as a legal party. Of these countries, only in Germany till the rise of Hitler was the Communist Party of any great political significance; and the reasons for that were many. The course of the German Revolution and the consequent split in the German Social Democratic Party and the formation of the Spartakus League under the leadership of such famous international figures as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Leibknecht and the contemporary victory of the Russian Revolution, were directly responsible for the initial success of the Communist Party in Germany. The weaknesses of Social Democracy and the worsening economic situation contributed to its steady growth. But in France, America and England, communist methods hardly produced and results. The present strength of the French Communist Party is due to the political conditions in Europe and the disintegration of French democracy, rather than to any marked success of the methods of the French Communist Party. Furthermore, it should be remembered that even the rigid communist methods undergo a sea-change under democratic conditions. The French and Italian communist parties, for instance, are no longer parties of chosen revolutionaries but mass parties, with hundreds of thousands of members.

Communist methods thus do not flourish in a democratic climate nor in conditions tolerable economic well-being. It is for this reason that a vital element in the communist method is deliberate and planned attempt to bring about political instability and depressed economic conditions.

An undemocratic society develops internal strains and stresses that result eventually in a violent break-up. Communist methods having been perfected to be used under undemocratic conditions, they are ultimately based on the possibility and desirability of a well-organized minority utilizing conditions of chaos to impose its rule over the rest of the community. During times of widespread social disorganization, social will is disintegrated and any minority

that has a will of its own and the proper organizational set up can force its will upon others. These mothods require for their success periods of social unrest and disequilibrium. Wherever these conditions do not exist communists feel like fish out of water and they always attempt artificially to create the conditions in which their methods can succeed. Therefore they are everywhere the enemies of democracy and ordered change.

Under democratic conditions a party that believes in democratic socialism follows entirely different methods. A time might come when even a democratic party might find itself in the midst of anarchic conditions. Obviously in these conditions it must represent the largest possible crystallization of the social will and, as such, try to impose its will over society by means that cannot be democratic—because in those conditions the framework of democracy would have broken down—but are based on force. No doubt in these conditions too the democratic socialist party much try to rally round it as large a section of the toiling people as possible, but for the rest it must have to depend on force. To some this may not appear very different from communist methods, but this will amount to saying that communist methods were evolved primarily to suit conditions of chaos. I am sure Lenin would have been forced by history to adopt other methods had democracy developed further in Russia and had not Russian society collapsed round him like a house of cards in 1917. And then Leninists would have sung to a different tune.

The important thing for us to consider is, when conditions are different from what they were in Russia under the Czar, shall we follow the same methods ?

Some have the fear that while democratic conditions might exist today they may not be present tomorrow and if the Party is organized so as to function under today's conditions, it may not be able to function properly in the conditions of tomorrow. This fear is unfounded. If democratic methods are not divorced from a revolutionary outlook, the Socialist Party, if it has functioned properly as a democratic party under conditions of democracy, would have the organizational strength, the popularity, the necessary mass contact, the resilience and the revolutionary will to function equally effectively in conditions of social break-down. The Congress functioned alternately for years as a legal organization, utilizing democratic freedoms that existed, and as a revolutionary

party functioning illegally and carrying on a mass struggle. The resilience of the Congress was largely due to the revolutionary will of its great leader, but its success in struggle was due to its widespread organization and mass influence built up through democratic functioning.

What is a revolutionary will, I may be asked. It is (1) the will that allows no compromise with fundamentals or blurring of the final objectives : (2) it is the will that does not flinch before danger and suffering and deviate from the right path on their account. I believe the Socialist Party is possessed of such a will; and as long as it has that will, it cannot fail.

A word more about communist methods. Nót only are these methods inapplicable to a democratic society, their use does not lead to the goal of democratic socialism. Since 1917 the Communist Part in Russia has been the ruling party. After the victory of the Revolution the main task before the Communist Party has been that of shaping and maintaining its dictatorship. Every organizational change that has taken place in the Russian Communist Party has been influenced by this all-important consideration. Inside the party itself, the struggle for leadership and the ruthless faction-fight led to the perfection of a system of control and management from the top that left very little internal democracy. The party was thus moulded not only to maintain its grip over Russia but also to enable the *Vozd* the Russian equivalent of the *Fueher*, to maintain his grip over the party itself. Those who denounce totalitarianism when practised by others, but are eager to practise it themselves on others find the methods of the Russian Communist Party peculiarly acceptable. But those who believe in freedom and democratic socialism and have a living faith in it, must reject communist methods.

Let me turn to the conditions in our own country. It need hardly be pointed out that the India of today is not the Russia of Czarist days. There is no Czar in India. We have considerable freedom and there is adult franchise There is, no doubt, every danger of severe curtailment of the liberties of the people, yet there is ample opportunity for open political work, and there is every hope that, with the development of the socialist movement, the liberties of the people will be preserved. Indian feudalism and capitalism have not been the ruling class in this country but understudies of the Imperial power, The loyalty of the armed and civil

services has not been given to these classes. These classes, moreover, are on the defensive today and cannot hope to maintain their position except with the support of a popular mass organization such as the Congress. The Congress in not yet a capitalist party, but largely an agrarian party passing slowly under capitalist control. Again, 1948 is not 1917. The frontiers of capitalism are receding, and those of socialism and communism are advancing. Capitalism is old and discredited. The chances of socialism are far brighter today than they were thirty years ago.

In view of this situation communist methods of organization are patently unsuited to India. We must devise our own pattern of organization, which will suit the given conditions and further the objectives of democratic socialism. As I said at the outset, if our Party is to succeed in establishing socialism in India by the consent of the people, it must bring the majority of them under its influence and organization. It must become a mass party.

Should the Socialist Party, then become a people's party ? Is a mass socialist party the same as a people's party ? Some friends have suggested that in order that the party might rapidly become an alternative to the Congress, it should convert itself from a socialist party into a people's party. The view of these friends is that the socialist party with a clearcut socialist policy and programme has a restricted appeal; whereas a people's party with a 'non-sectarian' programme that offers the people good government and enough food, cloth and shelter, may quickly grow to the proportions of the Congress : the two parties being something like the Republican and Democratic parties in the U.S.A.

I reject this suggestion because, firstly, such a people's party cannot establish a socialist society and I am more interested in that than in merely replacing the Congress government. Secondly, it seems fantastic to me to suppose that a socialist party should fail to win the allegiance of that section of the upper class which is not satisfied with Congress rule and wants an alternative party. It happens in bourgeois society everywhere that the bourgeois class itself is split into at least two rival political camps. In India too the suggestion about a people's party, as distint from a socialist party, merely means that a section of the Indian bourgeoisie which is not satisfied with the Congress wants to create under it domination a rival organization to the Congress. When frinds suggest that a people's party will grow rapidly, they are mainly thinking of

the financial resources that such a party might be able to command. From financial resources to organization and propaganda appears to them, and not wrongly, to be only one long jump. But such a people's party would be another mass party functioning under bourgeois control and playing as parliamentary politics, as rival bourgeois parties do elsewhere, without ever desiring to effect any vital social transformation. This suggestion, therefore, of converting the party into a people's party must be rejected.

This, however, does not mean that a socialist party is not, or cannot be, a people's party. To be effective and to fulfil its purpose, a socialist party must in a real sense be a people's party. But it can be so only when it has succeeded by organization and propaganda in convincing the people that socialism is nothing more than the realization of their needs, desires and aspirations. A socialist party becomes a people's party when the people generally are converted to socialism.

We reach then the conclusion that the Party must function as a socialist party with a definite socialist ideology and programme and that it should grow into a mass party, rather than remain a party of the select. What shall be the mass party pattern into which the Party should grow ? I find in the world two types of mass party patterns. One, a pattern similar to the Congress pattern of organization (as it was till recently) : i.e., having a mass membership, of which every member is individually enrolled. The other, the British Labour Party pattern, which combines individual mass membership with organizational membership The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation of Canada is the only other socialist party in the world which I have found to follow the British pattern.

I recommend for our Party the Labour Party pattern. It has many advantages. It links the political party with the class organizations of the masses and with their day-to-day struggles. In this manner, the political party in reality becomes the party of the masses. Secondly, it makes possible a rapid growth and development of the Party. Individual enrolment might take long to bring millions of workers and peasants into the Party, whereas through trade-union and kisan-panchayat membership, the period of time might be considerably reduced. Thirdly, the attachment of individual members to the Party, especially when enrolled in the mass, will not be so deep as when their unions or panchayats are

affiliated to the Party. Fourthly, an individual toiler may be just a Hindu or Muslim, Harijan or Thakur, but as a member of a trade union or kisan panchayat he will be more often than not a labourer or a peasant. That is, when he enters the Party through his class organization, he brings with him a consciousness of class : and that puts him in tune with socialism.

In following the British pattern there are obvious difficulties. That pattern was an organic growth and was made possible by the fact that British labour had one single trade union organization. The growth of our Party too has hitherto been organic, and this has been its strength. Its further growth to must not be artificial. But in adapting the British party structure to our purpose, I find no artificiality : much less artificiality, at any rate, than if we were to adopt the Russian pattern. It is true that trade unionism is divided in India, but whether trade unions are affiliated or not to the Socialist Party, the Party cannot hope to achieve success unless the preponderant part of Indian labour comes under its political leadership. In Britain too while there is one Trade Union Congress, there are many unions that are not affiliated to the Labour Party and many union officials who are members of rival parties. Leaving the question of party structure aside, let it be remembered that the Socialist Party has no future unless it becomes the dominant party among Indian labour. If that be the definite goal of the Party, the adoption of the British pattern should rather pave the way than present obstacles.

To the mass enrolment of individuals an objection may be raised on the plea that these persons may have no knowledge of socialism. But if socialism is the concretization of the aspirations of the masses it is wrong to think that every toiler must first be converted to socialism before he can belong to the Socialist Party. Rather, the Socialist Party should be a party that expresses the feeling and aspirations of the toilers. I would, therefore, rather let the millions come into the Party and shape it than have the Party adopt a doctrinaire attitude. Every toiler, there can be little doubt, will happily subscribe to the ideal of a classless society. There is no doubt that socialist philosophy is much more than that, and that the Party does start with a definite set of well-defined principles, but it does so precisely because it feels that the principles ideate the interests of the masses. If they do not do so, they must change in the course of the movement. It is also true

that the Party starts out to imbue the toilers with certain ideas. But these ideas too can be accepted by the masses only when they find them in actual practice to be in their interest. Thus, while socialist theory is an ideation of the miseries and needs and desires of the masses, the test of the theory lies in its acceptance by the masses. Therefore, I do not apprehend any danger in throwing open the doors of the Party to the actual toilers. I would qualify these remarks when applied to the middle-class. This class, economically and socially, is peculiarly situated. Its outlook oscillates between the outlooks of the upper and the toiling classes. Therefore, there may be a certain danger in mass enrolment of middle-class individuals and so, a certain caution may be exercised in this regard. But, here too there is no need to insist on any work quota as a necessary condition for membership. Any individual who agress with the principles, policy and programme of the Socialist Party may be admitted. I am conscious of the danger pointed out by some friends, of undesirable elements coming into the Party in this manner, but to my mind, even this danger can be fought only if the Party becomes a mass party.

I therefore, propose that the Party should consist of the following elements : individual members; organizations that become members such as trade unions, artisans' associations; associations of professionals; kisan panchayats, kisan mazdoor panchayats, representatives of the Socialist Youth Organizations; cultural associations and clubs. I should also have included in this list co-operative societies, but the Congress governments are so petty-minded that this may become an obstacle in the growth of co-operation in this country.

All representative of member organizations must also have ward units, in urban areas, and in rural areas, local units. The units will be the only Party committees where all members will function in the capacity of individual members

Above the unit will be higher bodies; Constituency Branches, District Branches, Provincial Branches. In these bodies representatives will come from the units, representing the individual membership, and from the member organizations, representing them.

An important point that must be cleared up is that collective membership of a trade union or kisan panchayat does not mean that the Hind Mazdoor Panchayat (H M.P.) or Hind Kisan

Panchayat (H.K P.) as a whole is to be affiliated to the Party. These are both independent organizations, and will live their own life, in accordance with there will. Only the primary unions and panchayats will be affiliated to the Party; and there may be even such primary bodies that are affiliated to the H.M.P. or the H.K.P. and yet are not allied to the Party. Nor would it be necessary for every members or official of a union or panchayat to be a member of the Party.

I should like here to digress a little and say a few words about politics and the trade union movement. There are still people in this country who would keep the workers away from politics. Nothing could be of greater disservice to the working class. The working class has a dual role to play : economic and political. A trade union cannot merely be satisfied with collective bargaining, it must also attempt to influence legislation and government. In the picture, I have presented, a trade union performs the function of collective bargaining through the H.M.P. and the political function by sending its representative to the Socialist Party. The trade union thus is the base on which two structures are built up, each autonomous, but each expressing the will of the organized working class, namely, the central trade union body (H.M.P.) and the political party (S.P.).

In recommending this Party structure I am also influenced by certain other considerations. First, such an organizational set-up might attract trade unionists, kisan workers, social workers, individual socialists, even socialist groups, who keep away today on the ground that the Socialist Party is merely a caucus and not a party.

Second, it will remove the growth of authoritarianism and sectarianism in the Party. At present admission of new members is practically entirely in the hands of the Provinical executives, for the Scrutiny Board does little more than put its seal of approval on the recommendations received from them. This has resulted in some provinces in stagnation and shutting out of newcomers. Group politics and the will to leadership also get the change for full play in these circumstances. The recommended structure, by allowing the democratic principle full scope, will help the growth of the Party.

Third, I have often been asked what guarantee there was that when in power socialists too would not go the way of Congressmen.

Among other things, the Party structure I have suggested should be a powerful guarantee against this. Congressmen theoretically represent the masses. But, the masses they represent are like amorphous sand, they have no organized will to exert over their representatives. It is merely individuals who choose the Congress representative. In the Socialist Party under the new structure, on the other hand, the masses will come largely through their class organizations, i.e., through workers and peasants unions. The representatives of these unions would be under a conscious discipline and would be liable to be brought to book if they went wrong. In the British Labour Party, for instance, the trade union representatives cannot flout their unions and hope to remain in the Labour Party. Collective membership is thus a guarantee against opportunism and self-seeking.

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PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

AS A STUDENT OF ROY

It was during the years 1924 and 1925 that in Madison, Wisconsin, where I was studying then, I came by such works of Roy as *India in Transition*, *The Aftermath of Non-co-operatian*, *What Is To Be Done*, etc. I was deeply impressed, specially by *India in Transition*. I believe I also used to receive copies of a journal, called 'The Masses', if I am not mistaken, edited by Roy and produced perhaps in Germany. Having joined the non-co-operation movement in January 1921, and having lived through its tide and ebb before departing for the U S.A. in August 1922, my young mind was ready for the kind of ruthlessly analytical method that Roy was employing in his writings. It was the influence of Roy's writings, reinforced powerfully by Lenin's thesis on the role of communists in national independence movements of the colonies, that kept me away, on my return to India in 1929 November, from joining the underground Communist Party of India, which had by then come to submit meekly to the Stalinist policy of isolationism and splitting of not only the nationalist movements but also of the world socialist and labour movements, with what disastrous results the world has not forgotten yet : the rise of Hitler. Instead, I

*Address delivered by Sri Jayaprakash Narayan at the All-India Conference of the Radical Humanist Association held at Calcutta on 29 December, 1973.

joined the Congress; but true to Roy's teachings, organized within a few years a socialist group within the Indian National Congress. Looking back, it was wrong and also contrary to Roy's thinking that I along with my co-founders of the Congress Socialist movement gave to our group the name and structure of a party However, this is not the occasion to go into all that past history.

RADICAL HUMUNIST ASSOCIATION

I understand that at this Conference you will be discussing the draft declaration of the principles and values of the Radical Humanist Association and movement. I have carefully gone through the draft and find myself in complete agreement, except for one point. If I may say so, the Sarvodaya movement too would be in complete agreement with you, except again, for that one point.

In the Second Fundamental Principle it has been said that "Humanism excludes supernaturalism and affirms that man, with his increasing power over nature, is the maker of his future " Without wanting to take up avoid philosophical controversy, I do wish to submit the modern science, particularly modern psychology, does definitely point to a reality beyond the human mind. Whatever the nature of the human spirit may be, it definitely seems to be of a higher order than the Mind Furthermore, it would be ostrich-like to ignore the experience of a long line of spiritual seekers of India and other countries, an experience that transcends Mind and Reason It would not be rational. I think, to sweep aside Sri Aurobindo's intimations of the Super Mind, the Supra-Mental Force, the emergence of a new and higher human race, possessed of a nature very different from and humanistically superior to what human nature happens to be at present.

MY POONA FAST

When during my three weeks fast in Poona, I was faced with the question of why a man should be good. Reason did not seem to me to give an adequate answer. I agree that "As a rational being, man can be both free and moral." But, again, as rational being he can be tyronnical and immoral, to achieve a noble goal, for instance. I do not think that the statement "The moral

impulse. . . is an acquisition made by man in the course of aeons of biological and social evolution" can stand the rigour of scientific analysis. When we reflect upon the opportunities offered to man by the physical and social sciences to shape a better future for himself, we find that man himself is the greatest obstacle to that future. And it does seem to me that Reasor alone will not be able to help man to surmount that obstacle. When Vinoba says that the age of religion and politics is over and a new age of spirituality and science has dawned, Radical Humanists should sit up and think again.

I am sure you will be discussing here, in the manner of conferences, a number of important national and international issues. You will also pass resolutions and make recommendations to the powers that be, and perhaps also to your members. While I do not wish to suggest that we should cease to criticize official policies and actions and to make suggestions to the government—this essential democratic function we should of course continue to perform—I do wish to urge that we turn our attention more and more to the people, including the intellectual elite and the youth, and suggest forms and programmes of action, both of constructive and self-help nature as of combative, coercive and non-co-operative nature. The forms of action must of course be strictly peaceful; in keeping with the democratic way of life.

ALTERNATIVE TYPE OF DEMOCRACY

Following this line of thinking, I wish to issue a call from this platform to build an alternative type and structure of democracy. My call is not to the political parties, whether in or out of power nor to the Parliament, nor to the government. My call is directly to the people, particularly to the youth.

We have the experience now of twenty-six years of party democracy. During this period almost every political party has had its share of power, and we have a fair idea of how they have performed and what they have done for the people. I do not think it would be wrong to say that the difference between the performances, as distinct from the manifestoes, of the various parties, in or out of government, has been no more than that between tweedledum and tweedledee. But apart from that, the more basic point is that party democracy, that is, democracy based on and

manipulated by political parties, is a most unsatisfactory and defective system of democracy. The people, by and large, are fed up with all political parties and the present form and practice of democracy. They go along with it and willy-nilly play their part, which is a nominal one in any case, namely, that of casting their vote once in a while because, there is no alternative before them. We are often reminded of Churchill's saying that while parliamentary democracy has its obvious fault, it is the best form of government until a better one is discovered. I believe the people have a better alternative, there is a better form of democracy possible, a real people's democracy.

Let no one think that it is my alternative or that I myself have thought it up. It is a form a democracy the principles and outlines of which were drawn up by Gandhi and Roy themselves. In fact, the underlying idea goes much further back. You will find it in Mrs. Annie Besant's conception of Indian democracy and in that of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das and Dr. Bhagwan Das—the so-called Das—Das outline constitution of free India.

M.N. ROY—THE FIRST LEADER TO DISBAND HIS POLITICAL PARTY

As far as I am aware, M.N. Roy has been the only political leader in history who himself disbanded the political party he had conceived and built up : the Radical Democratic Party. There is no doubt that had Gandhiji lived he would have carried out the proposal he had drafted at the suggestion of the Congress Working Committee, on the night before his assassination, for the dissolution of the Indian National Congress and its reorganization as an Association of the Servants of the People, the Lok Sevak Sangh as he called it. But in the event Roy remains the solitary example of such a political leader.

Both Gandhi and Roy had no doubt their own pictures of the political structure they would have attempted to build. As far as I can see, these pictures had a great deal in common, even though the terms they used to describe them and the arguments they advanced to support them were necessarily different because of their different background and approaches. Two common characteristics, both of a basic kind, stand out. Both conceived of a non-party democracy and both were clear that democracy was to be

built up from below, based on gram raj (village self-government) in the case of Gandhi and *people's committee* in the case of Roy. Being a social ctivist, I am not interested in theoretical structure-building. My wish is, as I said before, the place before you, and from this platform before our people, particularly our youth, a programme of immediate socio-political action. My call is : *Onward to People's Democracy.*

The first step towards a people's democracy is to build its foundations, namely, gram sabhas in the countryside, and neighbourhood and work councils in the cities and towns. The gram sabhas are not secondary bodies, that is, bodies made up of the representatives of the people, but primary bodies comprising the whole people, that is, all the adult residents of the village. The village here means just a hamlet, large or small. It is a face-to-face community where direct democracy can be practicable In the urban areas, existing municipal wards may be too large in population to be a face-to-face community where all adult citizens, or even one repreaentative from each resident family, may meet and deliberate together in any meaningful, way. Therefore, I have suggssted neighbourhood councils made up, let us say, of a hundred families living in the neighbourhood of one another. In factories, offices, educational institutions and other work places "communities of work" may be formed on the shop, office or any other convenient basis, for a participative manner of deliberation, decision and action.

THE ROOTS OF DEMOCRACY

Formation of *gram sabhas, nagar sabhas, sharam sabhas*—these terms need not be considered immutable—will not complete the task of building the founding of *people's democracy.* They must be made active, functioning bodies. That is to say, they must meet regularly, discuss their common problems and evolve co-operative and collective forms of action to manage their affairs. Forms of give and take and sharing will have to be developed. The educated youth, who may be dropouts from schools and colleges or unemployed graduates or post-graduates, must come forward to take up this works. My call is essentially meant for them.

It will be only after the primary people's democracies have functioned for some time that the stage will arrive for them to

group together horizontally and vertically, to from secondary institutions of people's democracy.

PYRAMIDAL DEMOCRACY

Just to illustrate my ideas, let me elaborate it in the context of elections to a state assembly. In the present system parties, or rather their "high command", set up candidates from above. The people play no part in that process; their role is limtied to voting for one or another candidate thus set up. The winning candidate becomes the "representative" of the constituency concerned. But the voters who voted him to office have no control over him. As a matter of fact the voters have no collective entity, nor any collective machinery to exercise control or influence over their so-called representative. The latter is in the control of his high command.

How will the system I am visualizing work ? Let us take a rural state assembly constituency. It should have on the average a population of around a lakh and about 60,000 voters. For simplicity's sake, let us suppose there are one hundred villages in the constituency. (In actual fact the number would be larger). If the first step discussed earlier has been completed, there should be a functioning *gram sabha* in each of the villages. Before six months or so of an assembly election, each *gram sabha* should meet to elect what may be called its delegate or delegates to a Gram Sabha Delegates' Council to be formed of all the delegates thus elected. The number of delegates *a gram sabha* may send to the Council would vary with the population of the village concerned, even the smallest village sending at least one delegate and the largest village sending, let us say, not more than five delegates. Supposing the average number of delegates per village works out at 3, there should be 300 members of the Gram Sabha Delegates' Council. After the elections to the Council are completed, the Council should convene at a central place in the constituency to select its candidate for the state assembly.

Two important requirements should be noted and emphasized for the successful functioning of this form and structure or democracy. One is that all the decisions of the gram sabha or its executive should be either unanimous, by general consensus or *nem com.* In cases where postponement of a decision is likely to

harm the community a decision by not less than 90 per cent majority may be taken. Other forms of decision-making may be by drawing lots (in appropriate cases) or by referring the issue concerned to an umpire or a committee of umpires. But these forms may be adopted only when they are agreed upon unanimously or without opposition.

GRAM-SWARAJ OF VINOBAJI

This requirement is necessary to prevent the community from splitting and in order to guard against the formation of factions, parties, etc. The faults of this system of decision-making are obvious enough, but I can say on the basis of my experience of the *gram swarajya* movement launched by Vinobaji that on the balance its merits outweigh it demerits

The second requirement is that no one residing in the village or the urban or the work community who belongs to a political party should be elected by the gram sabha or the other primary democracies to any office. The reason is obvious enough. It is a member of a political party is by definition controlled from above by his party hierarchy, whereas a representative under a people's democracy must be controlled from below by the people directly or by their organs elected in the manner herein described.

THE GRAM SABHA DELEGATES COUNCIL

It follows that Gram Sabha Delegates Council should also select its candidate either by general consensus or by a process of elimination, such as the single transferable vote or the simple method of multiple voting, so as to discover the candidate with the largest support in the Council. Once, such a person is found, the Council should select him unanimously as its candidate. It follows that if this whole process is gone through understandingly and smoothly, the candidate put up by the Council of Gram-Sabha Delegates should win hands down and without spending a single paisa. He will be a candidate of the people and it will be for the people to vote for him and have him elected.

This of course is an ideal picture. In actual practice there will be many difficulties and the political parties and other vested interests may do everything in their power to defeat this process. But, it is nobody's case that the real people's democracy will be built in one day or in one try.

I shall conclude by adding a couple of points in order to further clarify my proposal. First, the Gram Sabha Delegates' Council shall not be dissolved after selecting and putting up the people's candidate, but will continue to function until the next election. Second, its main function will be keep contact, on the one hand, with the *gram sabhas*, report to them and receive their advice and instructions, and, on the other to keep in touch with the M.L.A., receive reports from him, hold discussions with him and give him advice and instruction. The Council will also arrange the tour programmes of the M.L.A in the constituency so that he keeps directly in touch with his electors.

How such M.L.A's. shall function in the assembly, and if in a majority, how they should form and run the state government are issues that are important, and I have my own ideas about them. But, it seems to be premature to talk about that here.

Also the question how the neighbourhood communities and their councils and the work communities and their councils shall work are equally important, but I personally have done nothing in this direction are have no experience from which to generalize I think this is the field of work to which you are urgently called and for which you are most eminently suited. Most of you are urban-based and some of you are also involved in the labour movement. So this is a proper field and a ripe movement for you to give effect to Roy's idea of peopl'e committees.

THE PRESENT TWO FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS

For the rural area, Vinobaji's work in the past some years with *Bhoodan, Gramdan, Gram Swarajya*—in that order—has given me and to hundreds of Sarvodava workers throughout the country the necessary experience and insight to take the initiative and give the programme a concrete shape. The people's disenchantment with the extant party democracy, on the one hand, and the Sarvodaya movements' apprenticeship in working out of Gram Swarajya at the grount level, on the other, are two favourable conditions, created from opposite directions, but converging to prepare the ground and the climate for a leap forward to a real people's democracy. My call to the country's youth is to seize this favourable opportunity and play the revolutionary role that the present age demands of them. Young men and women, pick up this torch and march on. Destiny beckons you. Success awaits you.

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DYNAMICS OF REAL REVOLUTION

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

As I see it, the essential nature of the revolutionary situation around us today and the revolutions that took place in history before our times was the expression, in different conditions and at different times, of the assertion of the human spirit for freedom, for joy, for self-realisation. I think it is this spirit, which is the essence of all human beings, that is being expressed today.

The revolt of the so-called lower castes of the Hindu society is this human spirit which you find in South Africa, in Southern Rhodesia, or in the American ghettos. I think, it is the same spirit which is working in the hearts of the students of Poland, Warsaw or Czechoslovakia. This is something which is irrepressible and if it were not so I do not think there would be hope for the human family.

Revolutions that have taken place, though they have been the result of these urges of the spirit of man, have come to be controlled and given shape and from of philosophies which tended to neglect the human spirit, which tended to emphasise organisations and institutions. Revolutionary leaders thought that they had succeeded in bringing about a revolution because they had succeeded in transforming the institutions of their society : political, economic and social.

NOBLE GOALS

I would not deny that in that sense there were revolutions, but

the very changes that were brought about by these revolutions proved to be inadequate in achieving and realising the real goals of the revolution. Those goals, equality or liberty or fraternity or brotherhood, stateless society, or from each according to his capacity and to each according to his needs, were some of the noblest goals ever expressed in words. All remain distant dreams. I do not know whether by the methods that are being followed those goals will ever be achieved.

I have one question : in this modern age of science if real modernity of outlook were to be expressed how should it be expressed ? If a country is really modern should there be this problem before us; discrimination between man and man ? In this age of science, the day of the nation-state which is one of the greatest evils in human history should be considered by any rational human being as a day that has passed. I do not know that purpose the nation-state serves today; yet it is this nation-state that has defeated all the revolutions that have taken place.

FREEDOM OF MAN

On the banner of communism was inscribed "Workers of the world, unite". The proletariate had no mother country or father country. And yet we have national communism arising practically in every communist state. What I want to point out is that there is no modern outlook in all this. In one respect man has gone in, so far he really doesn't know where he is. May be he is lost. Within, just beneath our skins, we are just the monkeys of hundreds of thousands of years ago, and we behave like that at the slightest provocations. We are prepared to murden each other burn down each other's houses and so on. We are human beings living in this age of great advancement and enlightenment and yet we are not really human; humad as Marx understood it or Gandhi understood it—and there is no difference I think—or as Lenin understood it. Differences are all in the transitional periods. They all wanted to reach that same goal where man would be a man and a free man, a brother to other human beings.

We are going through a very deep revolution, a revolution inside the hearts and minds of our young people. One of the most uplifting experiences that I have had in recent years has been the experience of meeting young students. A new spirit seems to move them. It's not only Vietnam or the race question,

I think something deeper is happening is their hearts. I think they are questioning the values of this civilization which is sparkling and so attractive to look at. Inside I do not know how sound or hollow it is. Therefore, if these revolutions had been brought about in different ways from those followed so far, may be the outcome of those revolutions would be different.

I am reminded of what Mahatma Gandhi used to say, that whereas, all other revolutions had been what he called single revolutions, revolutions which brought about changes in the outward forms in society, his revolution would be a double revolution; human revolution which would begin in the minds of men and would result in a social revolution in the institutions and outward forms of society. From a practical point of view, if we were to be true revolutionaries seizure of power by us, acquisition of power by us, the revolutionaries, should have no meaning whatever, and most of the revolutions meant merely that. Something more perhaps but more of the same kind.

Those of us who are revolutionaries wish for the same goals in our revolution, thought they might be enunciated in different languages. But more of less they are the same, because they come from within the quality of man, the brotherhood of man and so on; they are not merely utopian slogans.

NEW MEANINGS

I don't think social sciences or physical sciences would have any meaning if they failed to go as near as possible to these goals, even though these goals might not be achieved completely. Our ideals must be such that we never reach them. We should always strive to reach them, but never actually arrive at our ideals. They should be pitched so high.

If this be the desire of the revolutionaries, it should be realised that the revolutionary method to be adopted should have as its basic aim changing human beings, changing their values of life, changing their attitudes towards life, their attitude towards things, their attitudes towards men, towards nature.

A revolutionary at this age and time of history where man is landing on the moon snould have no lesser ideal than to build a world community of human beings; a real human family. This could be the only revolutionary goal of today. And if this is the

goal then all the questions of how aid is to be distributed and percentages of GNP and what machinery and all that, would lose the present meanings and acquire entirely new meanings.

Now the question is, how do we change human beings ? Who are we to change human beings ? Who has given this right to us ? Well, we are brothers and that has given us the right. If we eschew violence it is not because of any moral imperative, but because violence cannot change human beings. One can declare the brotherhood of man in one breath and begin to annihilate human beings in the other. This cannot be, and therefore, we have this right. We are always striving and this is a part of our striving that we are trying to change others.

LENIN'S DEATH

I do not know what would have happened if Gandhi had lived. The history of the Communist movement, the international movement of Communism, the history of Russia and the history of the world would have been very different had not Lenin died at a comparatively young age of fifty-four in 1924. That is my reading of Russian history. I consider it one of the greatest calamities that befell revolution when Lenin died so soon after the success of his revolution. I do not admire the meant that he followed, but they were not entirely his meant. They were means dictated at that time by the circumstances of history. He utilised them. Nobody knows what would have happended if Gandhi had lived. Many people wonder and ask me questions, "How can Gandhi's India do this, that or the other ? Where is Gandhi in India".

Lenin lived until nearly seven years after the revolution but Gandhi lived only for seven months after his revolution. Why did not India and Gandhi's followers follow in his footsteps and make India in image of his ideas ? The same question could be asked of Lenin's followers. Different answers would have to be given. It is not realised most of Gandhi's followers in India were followers not by conviction, but because it was expedient to follow him. This was true of me and this was true to Nehru and this was true of everbody who was in the political movement.

There were few among the political leaders of India was had accepted truth and non-violence, or truth and love, as a philosophy of life, as creed. They accepted it as an expediency.

India was a disarmed nation, disarmed by the British rulers. Gandhi's genius lay in the fact that he had placed in the hands of a disarmed people weapons which they could wield and which proved to be effective, assisted by the forces of history of course. Once independence had been won, the political followers of Mahatma Gandhi from Nehru downwards turned their backs on him. They were not insincere, because Gandhi knew, as Nehru's biography would show, that his followers had not accepted him fully. And this is the reason why those who followed Gandhi failed to implement Gandhi's idea of revolution.

Gandhi had a few followers who were not in the field of politics. In fact, very few had heard of Vinoba Bhave in those days. He certainly was not a political leader. It was this small band of Gandhi's followers to whom truth and non-violence, truth and philosophy of love and the method of love was something more than an expedient. It was something which was an article of faith with them Under Vinoba Bhave's leadership they have tried to follow Gandhi, and they have followed Gandhi precisely in trying to change Indian society by changing men.

I think this has relevance not only to India, but at the present time to the social revolution in all countries, particularly on the question of provery and the question of race. I cannot conceive of this revolution succeeding in any meaningful way, and human way except through the method which Gandhi had prescribed. Many people would my that this method may be a noble method, a well-meaning method but a very slow one. In India, to date more land has been redistributed through Vinoba Bhave's land gift movement than through legislation in spite of the Planning commission hammering at the idea that there must be land reforms and they must be adeqate and so on, so forth.

In Gramdan where the whole community is involved in this process of the beginning towards a new life, the first step is community ownership, legal ownership of land, sharing of land, sharing of produce, sharing of money incomes and sharing of labour; a shared community and a continuous programme of sharing and decision by consensus.

I think this is a much more rapid pace of change than even the most radical parties in India have brought about, I should add that traditionally those who are called radical are in many ways really conservative parties.

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GRAMDAN—KEY TO SOCIAL REVOLUTION

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

I think all those who have any acquaintance with rural India are filled with a sense of frustration and failure at what has happened since independence in our villages. During our struggle for freedom Mahatma Gandhi and his co-workers such as Kumarappaji, Vinobaji and others had worked out a fairly detailed plan and programme for the development of rural India for the reorganisation and reconstruction of the life of our villages with Gandhiji's conception of Gram Swaraj—self-governing village communities—as its basis with decentralisation in the economic organisation striving for self-reliance and self-sufficiency. But something happened after independence and the whole train of rural development seems to have got off the track. In spite of many years of community development and various other kinds of rural development programmes we find that the villagers of India are as backward as they were before independence. There has been little change in their economic condition, little improvement in their life, in their outlook, in their capacity to stand on their own legs, in their ability to manage their affairs and run their government—their own self-government. And yet that is what we all as fighters for freedom dreamed of.

ALIENATION OF THE EDUCATED

Those of us who had participated in the freedom movement

had formed a class by themselves and were deeply imbued with Gandhian thought. Outside of this class in our universities, for instance, the education given and the political and economic science taught was not Gandhian politics or Gandhian economics; it was not Kumarappa's Economics of Peace but Western economic science and Western political science. All those who managed the affairs of the government, the whole apparatus of bureaucracy of State—from the Chief Secretary downwards—had hardly any contact with the movement for freedom or any national-orientation in their thinking. After independence too it was the same people who managed the affairs of the State. They were the advisers of our Minister. They made the policy, worked out the details and placed them before the ministries. Some time some changes were made, some concessions might have been given to some of the political shibboleths of the old days. Then the policies were sent down to be implemented by the same bureaucracy. It was because of these two things, the intellectual alienation of the educated elite from Gandhian thought and the denational character of the bureaucracy, that the great derailment took place.

GRAMDAN—THE BASE FOR ALL CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

Up-til-now the experience of Gandhian constructive institutions has been that, though within the four walls of the institution, we have been able to do a great deal and may be in a few villages in which we have chosen to concentrate. But the great mass of villages have remained untouched We have succeeded in giving employment and some education through our basic schools, our charkhas and through our village-industries but we are not satisfied with all that, We do not have a base in the village for our work. The ground had not been prepared for the seeds that we sow to take roots, to grow, to develop and to flower and to come to fruition.

And here I think our great leader Vinobaji has created a situation in which it seems to have become possible for the first time for us to realise the ideal, the dream of Gram Swaraj. All these programmes had been there since Gandhi's time. What is new now in the situation is that the base has been created. The Gramdan movement has brought the message of social revolution, of economic revolution, of a moral revolution to the villages of

India. Now we find through this Gramdan movement, through this movement of voluntary renunciation of the right to property in land and voluntary sharing of what they have, whatever wealth they produce, whatever land they possess—and if they possess no land, then sharing of their labour power— a new spirit of community, of mutual help is being created and it seems possible for the first time in the Gramdan village to erect the entire structure of Gandhian rural development.

DECENTRALISATION ALONE IS NO SOLUTION

Now we have intensive Gramdan areas, whole blocks and districts where 75 per cent to 80 per cent of the villages have accepted Gramdan. Since this has happened our responsibilities have multiplied. The people will look to us; the Government will also hold us responsible; and everybody will ask us : 'Well, there has been this blockdan; this talukdan; what now ?'

The question of follow-up has become a matter of urgency for us. Undoubtedly the Panchayat Union will have to function. It will continue to be an agency of development.

But there should be a difference, otherwise blockdan will have proved to be a failure.

It is for us to help in showing that difference. Now who will do this ? Here there must be the division of labour to some extent.

Gandhiji talked of economic and political decentralisation not as an end in itself but as a means to the creation of a non-violent social order.

Now I think some of us are inclined to make the mistake that by merely setting up decentralised industries; khadi and other village industries, we have made full pre-parations for non-violence. We think this work in itself prepares us for non-violence, moulds our minds and the minds of the spinners and weavers engaged in village industries. But this is not an automatic process.

If the economy is decentralised, there is less violence; there is less concentration of wealth and less scope for exploitation of man by man. But please remember that for ages and ages the economy of society used to be decentralised. And yet there was terrible violence in society. All the princes, kings, nawabs and sultans of those days went on fighting all the time.

Non-violence did not automatically come into being because the economy was decentralised.

The Greek city states were the ideal examples decentralised political organizations Yet they were per petually at war among themselves. You know the history of Greece.

We uphold the concept today of 'community ownership' as in Gramdan, and consider such ownership conducive to non-violent social relationships.

We say Gramdan points the way to world peace. Again we take too much for granted.

What I am driving at is that for non-violence decentralization is not enough, common ownership is not enough. They are necessary, but not enough.

THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE IN MINDS

The roots of violence are in the minds of men and it there that the radical remedy has to be applied. That the task set for the Shanti Sena.

It is through the Shanti Sena programme that psychological training in non-violence, training in how to resolve conflicts and deal with situations of violence—the whole science of training in non-violence that has been developed in the West—has to be given. Not enough is being done by us today in this direction.

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SWARAJ FOR THE PEOPLE

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Our Democracy is like an inverted pyramid that stands on its head. Our obvious task is to set this picture right and stand the pyramid on its base. The mere fact that every adult Indian has the right to vote does not make the pyramid broad-based. The crores of individual and disparate voters are like a heap of particles of sand that can never be a foundation for any structure. The particles must be united to form bricks or encased within concrete moulds to be able to act as foundation stones. It is, therefore, obvious that if stability has to be imparted to our democracy, the base must be broadened and the top layer suitably architectured into the basic structure. If the base were strong, there would be little danger of the whole edifice of democracy toppling down at adventure's touch. Ours is a country of historic ruins. One has only to visit any of the ruins to see what happens when an edifice falls to the ground. It is always the roofing that comes down first, then the walls : the upper storey first then the lower, and the foundation stones are found intact even after the passage of thousands of years. The durability of a structure—no matter how ambitious—depends on tne strength of the foundation and the lower supporting structures.

In some countries of Asia and Africa the outward force of Western democracy had been imported. That is to say, there were, generally speaking adult franchise, a number of contending parties, an elected parliament and a Government responsible to it.

That meant, as in India, that their was a mass of disparate individual voters at the bottom—the sand heap—and on that foundation of sand was raised the topmost storey of Government. In such a state of affairs, it was only natural that people should feel that they had no stake in that kind of democracy even though they had the votes and that at the slightest, push the pyramid of democracy standing on its head would topple down and the millions of particles of stand, viz., the disorganized voters, would look on as helpless spectators. It is conceivable that if the democracy that had been knocked down was corrupt and inefficient and had failed to tackle such vital problems as those of food and unemployment, the voters might even welcome the event. It is not the abstract virtues of democracy that so excite us, the democratic intelligentsia, but the concrete fruits of democracy in terms of welfare and the palpable stake they have or part they play in working it that determine the attitude of the mass of the people anywhere to the institutions and processes of democracy.

There is no doubt that the developed and mature democracies of the West are not so top-heavy and devoid of the support of broad-based infra-structures of various kinds. Nevertheless, even there government and decision-making do remain the privilege of the few. Except in Switzerland and perhaps the Scandinavian countries, Western democracy is little more than government by consent. With the growth of science and technology and a complex economic system, government is becoming more and more the business of smaller and smaller numbers of people. With the consequent growing concentration of economic and political power in the hands of fewer people to whether they are private citizens or officers of the State—democracy would soon be just a matter of form rather than of substance.

There is in the West a very healthy and vigorous system of local self-government. While this is to be welcomed, local self-government by itself cannot satisfy the needs of participating democracy as I visualise it. In the West, while there is a substantial measure of local self-government, the Central Government is all powerful; that is to say, all the major and vital decisions are taken at the Centre. This is far from my concept of participating democracy. What I have in mind is what Gandhiji often used to emphasize, namely that as you proceed from the bottom level of government to the top, each higher level should have less and less

functions and powers. To go back to the image of the inverted pyramid, the broad upper levels of present day democracy must be drastically sawed off and large portions of the vast upper floors brought down to earth so that the pyramid of democracy could become a real pyramid—narrow at the top and broad at the bottom. In such a system the people at each level would have the fullest opportunity to manage all those affairs that might pertains to that level. Such a system of democracy could give the people a stake in democracy as well as the sensation of Swaraj.

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A PLEA FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF THE INDIAN POLITY

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

While I have been influenced a great deal by Gandhiji's ideas on the subject, I should like to make it clear that what follows is not bound to any particular ideology or school of thought.

First of all, it is necessary to emphasise that the issue before us cannot be narrowed down merely to that of a better electoral system than the present one. The issue is a much more comprehensive one, namely, that of the nature of the polity most suitable for us at the juncture. Further, it is also necessary to remember that polity, whatever its nature, does not function in a vacuum, but has to fit into the larger social entity and subserve the larger social purpose.

I purpose in this paper to describe the main outline of the polity which to my mind is not only most suited for us but also most rational and scientific, with a brief statement of the reasons for my views.

I have pleaded for our present political institutions to be based on the principles that had been enunciated and practised in the ancient Indian polity, because (a) I believe that would be in a line with the natural course of social evolution and (b) those principles are more valid from the point of view of social science than any others.

Present Western polity is based upon an atomized society, the State being made up of an inorganic sum of individuals. This is

both against the social nature of man and the scientific organization of society. Ancient Indian polity was much more consistent with both these.

Let me make clear that this paper is not a treatise on democracy or government. I am dealing here with a practical and immediate question : what should be the principles and form of Indian polity at the present time.

I have not looked at this question from the point of view of any readymade preconceptions and have avoided giving any label to the views expressed here. Even the name, communitarian, was reluctantly used, because a descriptive term sometimes became unavoidable. My search here has been for the forms of social life, particularly of political life, that would assure the preservation of human values about which there is hardly any dispute in the world today; and my approach has been non-partisan and non-sectarian.

My colleagues in the Sarvodaya movement might miss the word, 'Sarvodaya' in this paper. But, I hope they will recognize that the goal of this enquiry is nothing else but the ultimate good and rise of all. At the same time, I should like to remind them that I have not been concerned here with the ultimate state of things, but with the next immediate step towards a better way of life. Furthermore, my enquiry has been mainly confined to the political field.

On the very portals of democracy—irrespective of its form and structure—are words written that can never be wiped off, without wiping off democracy itself. No kind of democracy can exist without the democratic freedoms—freedom of conscience, of association, of expression—and the Rule of Law. Where these freedoms do not exist, nor the Rule of Law, there can be no democracy. For my enquiry here I take these words as axiomatic and inscribe them in bold letters on the doorway before entering the house of Indian democracy.

SOME GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT DEMOCRACY

Perhaps it would be well, at the outset, to keep in mind that the ideal [of democracy] can never fully be realized in India or anywhere else. All that is possible is to approach the ideal as nearly as possible.

It is for this reason that many political writers narrow down the ideal considerably and advance a realizable definition of democracy. Consider the following from an internationally recognized political authority : ' "Government of the people by the people", "Government of the nation by its representatives" these are fine phrases for arousing enthusiasm and fashioning eloquent perorations. Fine phrases with an empty ring. No people has ever been known to govern itself and none ever will. All government is oligarchic : it necessarily implies the domination of the many by a few.'[1] Again the same author writes : "The formula "Government of the people by the people" must be replaced by this formula "Government of the people by an *elite* sprung from the people".'[2]

Consider again the following : 'The extreme case of political democracy is that in which people govern themselves directly, making the laws, dispensing justice, and (although this is more difficult) carrying out or overseeing the administrative functions. But no such democracy ever existed, or ever will so long as men live together in large political units. Inevitably, then, political democracy must be translated into law and representative government. Democracy does not assume that the "people" actually govern themselves, and its theory makes plenty of room for leadership. Democracy in Western usage stands for the free conflict of ideas and leaders, from among which the electorate makes a choice.'[3]

These are strong words from wise and learned authorities, but I doubt if they will serve for all times. It might be said that the farthest democracy has advanced in the West is elected oligarchy. Western democracy may, therefore, be called not democracy but democratic oligarchy.

It is questionable, however, if the 'people' will remain permanently satisfied with such a situation. It may also be asked if the world-wide totalitarian assault on democracy does not acquire a point and a relevance on account of the fact that the peoples of democracies do not experience the glow and satisfaction of self-goverment.

It is further questionable if democrats of all times and climes, social idealists and thinkers, the spirit of man itself will ever remain satisfied with the current Western definition of democracy. Already, I believe all these elements have combined—the thinkers, the idealists, the people, the spirit of man—to demand a more

satisfying participatory democracy. Indeed, it is my firm belief that to the extent to which democracy becomes truly participatory, to that extent would the onrush of totalitarianism be stemmed and even rolled backwards.

Therefore, while bowing my head to scholarship and learning, and also while remembering that the ideal could never be fully realized, I am for ever pressing forward with the quest for democracy and for discovering the ways and means by which more and mote people could govern themselves more and more.

Let me now turn, as a part of this quest, to the formulation of some general considerations about democracy.

First of all, let it be pointed out that the problem of democracy is basically, and above all, a moral problem. Constitutions, systems of government, parties, elections—all these are relevant to the business of democracy. But unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people are appropriate, the best of constitutions and political systems will not make democracy work. The moral qualities and mental attitudes most needed for democracy are: (1) concern for truth; (2) aversion to violence; (3) love of liberty and courage to resist oppression and tyranny; (4) spirit of co-operation; (5) preparedness to adjust self-interest to the larger interest; (6) respect for others' opinions and tolerance; (7) readiness to take responsibility; (8) belief in the fundamental equality of man; (9) faith in the educability of human nature.

These qualities and attitudes are not inborn in man. But he can be educated in them and trained to acquire and practice them. This task, let it be emphasised, is beyond the scope of the State. The quality of the life of society should itself be such that it inculcates these values in its members. The prevailing social ethics, the family, the religious and educational authorities and institutions, the example that the *elite* set in their own lives, the organs of public opinion—all these have to combine to create the necessary moral climate for democracy to thrive. Thus, it should be clear that the task of preparing the very soil in which the plant of democracy may take root and grow is not a political but an educative task.

It is undeniable that there is a conflict today between two values of life, namely, between wanting more goods and wanting more freedom. Those, however, who believe in freedom should have no difficulty in making the choice. In a poor country like

India the masses may not yet be faced with this choice, but in the form of an ideal of life, the choice before India is as real as 'before Europe or America.

Which of the two choices India will make depends not upon Parliament or any type of political action, but, among other things, upon the example that the *elite* of society will set in their personal lives.

This issue of voluntary limitation of wants has another fundamental significance for democracy. In the democratic countries the cry is becoming stronger against the growing power of the State and against state-ism generally. This is a justifiable cry and democrats will have every sympathy with it.

Here we have perhaps the most difficult question that democracy faces today, the question as to how to resolve the following dilemma : when there is liberty it leads to abuse and necessitates State interference, and when there is State interference it leads to curtailment of liberty. How then to preserve liberty and prevent its abuse ? There are no political means by which the dilemma can be resolved, there are only moral means. The obverse side of the medal of liberty is responsibility. If the individual is not prepared to take social responsibility, if he uses liberty for self-aggrandisement and neglects or hurts the interests of others, some form of state-ism becomes inevitable. It is here that the pertinence and wisdom of Gandhiji's concept of trusteeship becomes evident. The only democratic answer to state-ism and totalitarianism is trusteeship. But trusteeship cannot be practised without voluntry limitation of wants. An individual cannot function as a trustee unless he is prepared to share his possessions with his fellow men : this he cannot do unless he has learned to curtail his wants. Thus voluntary limitation of wants, in other words, the rejection of materialism or the unlimited pursuit of material satisfactions, is essential for the achievement and preservation of democracy.

The problem of democracy is intimately connected with such social institutions and attitudes of mind as are represented by the caste system and the practice of untouchability. A society in which men are considered high, low or untouchable according to the families into which they are born, is very far from being democratic. It is quite a different matter that individuals are endowed at birth with different abilities and aptitudes, That is a biological

phenomenon, with which caste has nothing to do. It should be appreciated by every Indian democrat that the system of caste hierarchy and untouchability is the greatest and most stubborn enemy of democracy in this country. At the same time it should also be appreciated that vanquishing of this enemy is, again, not a political but an educative task. It is also, but to a much lesser degree, an economic task. The social stature of the depressed and backward castes will undoubtedly rise with imprvement in their economic condition. But, it would be a mistake to believe that economic improvement by itself would be sufficient to remove caste distinctions. The economically advanced castes too observe hierarchical distinctions among themselves.

In countries like India that have but recently emerged from foreign rule, the problem of democracy is further complicated by the fact of economic backwardness and the absence of democratic experience or tradition.

The problem of capital formation (which includes the problem of fixing the limits of present consumption and saving), the direction and utilization of labour and resources and similar problems of economic development are obviously capable of easier and quicker solutions under dictatorship—communist or any other—than under domocracy. This is one reason for the attraction that communism has for the inteilligentsia of the backward countries.

Here the people of these countries are faced with a moral choice. Those who have chosen democracy have chosen the higher way of life and have shown that they are more developed as human beings than the others who sacrifice things of the spirit for material things.

On closer scrutiny it would appear that under dictatorships the people are compelled to sacrifice on rather false pretences. Neither in fascist nor communist dictatorships has it been found that the people were given the things for which they were made to sacrifice their freedoms. The economic development of the dictatorship countries aims at power rather than peace and prosperity. The standard of living of the common people in Soviet Russia—even after forty-two years of communist dictatorship and despite the phenomenal industrial and economic development—is lower than that of the U.K. or Sweden, considerably lower than that of the U.S. The standard in other communist countries is, of

course, still lower, except perhaps in Czechoslovakia.

Incidentally, we have here the key to the understanding of the question of economic development of the backward countries under democratic regimes. If these countries also wish to build for power, they are doomed. Democratic India cannot complete with China at this game. She will either have to give up her democracy or face defeat in her attempt to build for economic—military power.

This is a crucial question for the new democracies to answer: are they going to build for power and war or for peace and happiness. Should the democracies depend upon military power for their defence or upon the forces of peace in the world and the moral strength of their own people? The least that is expected from a nation that calls Gandhi its Father is that it will refuse to build for power and will build for peace and happiness.

As for the second difficulty mentioned above in the building up of democracy in the backward countries, namely, the absence of recent democratic experience or tradition, it must be conceded that this difficulty is serious and real enough. Indeed, some consider it to be so serious as to apprehend the possibility of the rise of dictatorial regimes in these countries. The recent history of several Asian and African countries shows how justified is this fear . . .

In the case of India there are at least three factors of safety: (1) Due to the British connection, the intelligentsia or a large part of it, was subjected to the influence of British liberal democracy, and later a smaller part of it to British social democracy. (2) The struggle for independence, particularly because of Gandhiji's leadership was instrumental in inculcating to some extent the values of democracy in the intelligentsia as well as in the masses. Gandhiji's influence is still considerable on the mass and is being reinforced by Vinobaji. (3) Even though India has had no democratic traditions in the recent past, democracy and flourished for centuries in many parts of ancient India. This rich tradition could be drawn upon in order to build democracy in the present.

The danger considered above brings to the fore, among other things, the need to strengthen the base of democracy, so that even if something went wrong at the top, the base would endure and keep the foundations of democracy secure. This was the virtue of the village councils, the town committees, the traders' and artisans'

guilds of old. Kingdoms and empires rose and fell, conquerors came and went, but these organs of popular democracy, that drew their sanctions from the people of their own spheres and not from the central State, went on. Apart from the spiritual unity and way of life, it was these grass-root democratic institutions that have been responsible for the continuity of Indian society and culture. I deal below more fully with the question of building these basic structures of democracy.

Thus, we see that democracy—to use an idiom of mathematics—is a 'function' of so many factors, the resultant of so many different activities. There is no single human or social activity by which democracy is created. The house of democracy has many mansions and many types of bricks, and various types of materials and builders are needed to construct it. It is a pity that this is not realized more widely in this country. Otherwise, there would not have been such an obsession with politics and other activities could have been consciously undertaken for the building up of democracy.

The Sign-Posts From the Past

It is well-known that the literature on the political and economic institutions of ancient and medieval India is rather scanty Scholars, however, have gathered and pieced together enough material to give us a fairly reliable picture of the Indian polity.

I believe a study of this polity and of its relation to the whole ensemble of Indian life and culture should be useful, nay, essential for the determination of present political institutions. Political thought has, of course, developed much farther since those days, and new political institutions, such as those of parliamentary democracy, have been fashioned; and we must learn from this literature and experience. But, the implantation of any idea or institution that is not adapted to the native soil or grafted upon the roots of our life will not bear fruit or contribute to the organic and healthy growth of the body politic.

It may appear irrelevant to some to look to ancient India for sign-posts to guide us on the road to democracy. But India was perhaps the earliest home of democracy and some of her republics had lasted as long as a thousand years. And though kingship and monarchy were the predominant form of Indian polity, kings in

the earlier times were elected by and subject to the Kshatriya aristocracy. Even when hareditary kingship became the rule and the *Samitis* ceased to function, the village and town communities, the merchants' and artisans' guilds, the *varna* order, the *dharma*, or social ethics, continued to function independently of the central State—with which, indeed, the latter did rarely interfere—and to provide a stable, democratic basis for Indian polity. The democracy of the village communities was so stable and efficient that it continued well into the British period. Therefore, far from being irrelevant to the question of democracy, the ancient polity of India, particularly its underlying principles, should be of the utmost value to us in building up our democracy in the present.

'Community' and self-development and self-regulation of communal life are the distinguishing marks of ancient Indian polity. The State in India evolved through many forms beginning from the small Rigvedic 'kingdom' to vast monarchical empires of the Mauryas and Guptas. In between there were aristoratic republics spreading over the Punjab, Sind eastern U.P. and northern Bihar. These were the *sanghas* or *ganas*. Other forms of State were known variously as *rajya, swarajaya, bahurajya, dvirajya, vairajya, maharajya* and *samrajya*. But through them all persisted, and developed according to their own inner laws, the communal bodies. As these bodies were far more stable and enduring than the ever-changing States, the latter, whether republican or monarchic, had little authority over them, apart from guaranteeing that they functioned properly within their own jurisdiction and according to their own constitutions and regulations. The State interfered with them only when they transgressed their own proper functions and procedures. There were very rare exceptions to this rule.

'Community' in ancient India had two forms. The first and basic form was the territorial community, the village or township. With the advancement of communal life, these came to be coordinated into larger territorial communities, sometimes embracing a whole kingdom or republic. But, their area never seems to have been very large.

The other form of community was the functional or occupational community, the *varna*. Just as it was natural for man to find communion with neighbours, so it was for him to find it among those who followed the same occupation, euen if they were spread over wide, non-contiguous areas. Persons performing the same

functions and following the same occupations, shared a common way of life, had common problems and common rights and common responsibilities towards the larger society. It was thus that the social genius of India developed the functional communities, the four *varnas* and gave them a theoretical as well as practical form and basis. Each *varna* was self-determining and yet integrated with and responsible to the territorial community. The relationship of the individual with the two forms of the community and the interrelationship between the latter two made up a remarkable self-determining pattern of a complex ethico-socio-economic life.

The *varna* order of society has been so depraved and distorted that there would be few defenders of it now. Yet, the two fundamental truths of it are undeniable. That human beings have different aptitudes and abilities and every individual should be enabled to pursue and develop his natural gifts and inclinations are scientific truths that not only no one thinks of denying, but that every social scientist desires to make the basis of re-organization of society. The second truth is voiced in one way or another by the schools of functional democracy such as guild socialism, pluralistic State, occupational co-operation and others.

If our present political institutions are to be soundly based, if they are to draw sustenance from the Indian soil and, in turn, if they are to sustain, revive and strengthen the whole fabric of Indian society, they must be related to the social genius of India described above, and their texture must be woven again with an organically self-determining, self-developing communal life, in which occupations, professions and functions are integrated with the community.

This is not only a question of constitutional forms or political systems. It is a creative question in the widest sense of the term. It is a question of an ancient country finding it lost soul again.

The old village communities have survived in nothing else than their physical existence. They are no longer living communities acting jointly for the solution of individual or communal problems and the development of their moral and material life. It is not necessary here to go into the story of the destruction of the village communities. It would be enough to note that it was the result of the deliberate policy of an alien government that neither understood the character of communitarian polity nor felt secure in the

presence of such strong traditions of self-government and self-help. Nevertheless, the very fact that the villages do exist physically provides us with a ready-made foundation to build upon.

A word that figures boldly on the ancient sign-post is *dharma* Indian polity held that the State was subject to the *dharma*, which it was its duty to uphold and protect.

The concept of *dharma* was of great importance in ancient India; it prescribed and regulated individual and group behaviour in all walks of life.

This concept of *dharma* and its role in Indian polity and the wider life of society is another example of that synthetic, organic, communal organization of Indian society which has been discussed above. Communities, territorial or functional, had developed laws and codes of behaviour to regulate the internal life of the communities and groups and their relations with the rest of society. There were in addition codes and laws that were common to and accepted by all of them and that made up the universal social ethics. The ensemble of these social ethics exercised a powerful influence over the State.

Communal life having been completely destroyed, the roots of *dharma* have no soil from which to draw sustenance. *Dharma* has therefore, decilned and ceased to exercise any influence not only upon present polity, which is a wholly foreign implantation and has no roots in the Indian soil, but upon all social activities, such as commerce, education, labour, administration, priesthood. Unless life in India is again organized on the basis of self-determining and mutually co-ordinating and integrating communities that organic self-regulation of society, which the concept of *dharma* represented, will not be possible. To that extent democracy will remain distantly removed from the life of the people. Vinobaji is already speaking, for instance, of a *gram dharma* (the *dharama* of the village). But *gram dharma* will not arise, as he has stressed, unless the village become a community. Only then will it be possible for the village to adopt as its *dharma* the welfare of all the villagers, so that none goes without food, clothing, a roof over his head, work to do; no child goes without a knowledge of the three R's; none goes without the benefit of a minimum health service.

The ancient concept of *dharma* has to be revived and the appropriate *dharma* for a democracy has to be evolved. This, as of

old, will not be brought about by a legislative process. It can be done only in an organic manner; *dharma* must arise from life itself—life that is vital enough, real enough, organic enough to be able to throw up codes and laws for its internal regulation. The experience of recent social engineering may and should be drawn upon, but the main mould of life must be indigenous and consistent with the genius of Indian social organization.

THE SOCIAL NATURE OF MAN AND THE COMMUNITY

Man is a social animal and is endowed with a social nature. Further, the relation of the individual to society is not like that of the grain of sand to the sand dune. The relationship is rather like that of the living cell to the living organism. Man always lives in organic relationship with other men. It is the totality of these living relationships that constitutes society. Society is not a mere sum of separate individuals. Not even the crowd is an inorganic sum of human grains.

Modern Western democracy is based on a negation of the social nature of man and the true nature of human society. This democracy conceives of society as an inorganic mass of separate grains of individuals; the conception is that of an atomized society. The brick with which the present edifice of democratic polity is constructed is the individual vote and the whole process of democracy rests on the arithmetic of votes. The individual voter casts his vote as an atom of society, not as a living cell in organic relatinoship with other living cells. It is not the living together that is expressed and represented in the institutions and processes of democracy but an abstracted individual.

The problem of devising the right kind of polity is obviously a part of the larger problem of social reconstruction. While it is true that in the past greed and other false of life distorted or thwarted the working of man's social nature it is necessary now when man is beginning consciously to re-order his life, to create economic, political and other institutions that are consistent with that nature. Modern industrialism and the spirt of economism that it has created, a spirit which weighs every human value on the scales of profit and loss and so-called economic progress, have disintegrated human society and made man an alien among his

fellow men. Not only has the community been disintegrated, even the family is languishing in the West, and the mother, the woman, who was the centre and soul of the family, is losing her womanhood.

The problem of present day civilization is social integration. Man is alone and bored, he is 'organization man', he is man ordered about and manipulated by forces beyond his ken and control—irrespective of whether it is a 'democracy' or dictatorship. The problem is to put man in touch with man, so that they may live together in meaningful, understandable, controllable relationships. In short, the problem is to recreate the human community.

Let me now turn to the community. Territorial contiguity of a number of families, while it is the starting point and a most important condition, does not in itself make a community. The present-day Indian villages, for instance, are not proper communities. They were so at one time, but now are mere territorial settlements; life in them individualistic rather than communal, mineral rather than organic. In the true community there is communion, i.e., sharing, participation, fellowship, as the dictionary puts it; there is identity of interest; a feeling of unity in the midst of diversity; a sense of freedom within the framework of accepted social responsibilities; differentiation of functions converging to the single goal of the good of the community and its members. Caste, class, race, religion, politics—all these divide men into different, often conflicting groups. The community brings them together, unites them and harmonizes their interests. In the community agriculture, industry, capital, labour, skill, intelligence are not at logger-heads with one another, but are synthesised in the service of the community. Production and consumption are not two contra-posed sides of an economic bargain manipulated by distant agencies, but an integrated process serving a single and direct purpose. The community is built up of personal relationships, and choice and free will have their play within the limits of self-imposed discipline and common culture. In the community there is understanding participation by the members in all communal affairs; the community is a co-operative society, but the difference between it and the ordinary co-operative society is that co-operation in the community embraces the whole of life, rather than only its economic sector, and all the members of the

community rather than only those who purchase shares. Every one in the community has a share in its fortunes and misfortunes. In its internal matters the community is self-regulating and self-determining. Division is poison for the community, so the endeavour always is to seek the highest common denominator.

It is interesting to recall here that in the Indian village communities there were no elections to executive offices on the present majority—minority pattern, which is a divisive and disruptive process. Instead there was selection by general consensus of opinion, or sometimes, by drawing lots.

I do not mean to say by all this that such a community as described above ever existed before, or that it would automatically come about if only people began to dwell in small territorial areas. Had it been so, all the Indian villages would have become ideal communities. What I do, however, wish to say, and say it with all the emphasis at my command, is that such a community must be the ideal of future social re-construction. Only then will the social nature of man and the great humanist ideals of modern civilization find fulfilment. Only then too will there be true democracy.

For the heavily industrialized and urbanized countries of the West, this might be a difficult task—though many thinking Western minds are already giving their serious thought to it. But we in India—and I believe the same is true for other countries of Asia that have no passed under totalitarianism—are very favourably situated to launch upon this venture.

Before proceeding to consider the community further it may be advisable to deal briefly with the question of science and its impact on social organization. It may be urged that small local communities might have fitted at one time into the rural pattern of life, but in this age of industrialism they have hardly any place except as odd specimens of a past civilization. Industrialization and urbanization, it my be said necessarily go together.

I completely reject this view. The choice is not between urban and rural life. The dichotomy between urban and rural is false and unscientific. Both industry and agriculture are essential for human life and its development. The question of industry should be looked upon from the point of view of the whole man : it should never be forgotten that industry is for man and not man for industry. Some people talk of science and technology as if they

were like forces of nature, like an earthquake, let us say, about which nothing can be done except adjusting ourselves to it. Science and industry are products of the human mind and they should be bent to a human purpose. Indeed this is what has already happened; only the human purpose has not been an elevated and worthy one. Science and its offspring, technology, have been chiefly put to the service of private profit and power : the first represented by the capitalist system, the second by the modern centralized state, whether democratic or totalitarian.

If man decided that instead of being herded together in large cities it was better to live in small communities; instead of being automatons it was better to be conscious human beings; instead of being a grain in the sand-heap it was better to be members of a community, it should not be difficult for scientists to evolve the appropriate technology.

Thus, the society we are visualizing here will be neither 'urban' nor 'rural', it will be, if a name has to be given to it, communitarian. In other words, it will truly be society. Development of science has made it possible for the distinction between urban and rural to be abolished. The communities of the future will have a balance of agriculture and industry; they will be agro-industrial; they will make full use of science and technology so as to serve the ends of their life and no more. Owing to geographical and historical conditions agriculture may predominate in one and industry in another, but a balance between them will be the ideal of all. The present monstrosities, the big cities, will have to be decentralized as far as possible to relieve congestion and create healthy conditions of life; and for the rest, they will have to be so re-organized as to be made federations of smaller sized communities. To the extent this is not possible, the big cities will have to be endured, care being taken so that they do not become bigger, and no new big cities come up.

The question may be asked how large the local or primary community should be. There cannot be a cut-and-dried answer: there is no mechanical measure. The primary communities are organic growths and, depending upon may factors, their size varies. Let it be said that they should not be so small that a balanced development of communal life and culture becomes difficult, nor so large that life in them becomes impersonalized. The 'revenue village' in India has a well-understood definition, and even though it

usually consists of a number of hamlets, all the inhabitants of them do feel a sense of belonging to one another. So, in India the revenue village may be taken as the primary community. In states where the revenue village may be too large and an artificial unit, a new demarcation may have to be made.

We have so far discussed the local or primary community and shown how it is a creation of man's social natural and the unit with which the structure of society has to be built, Let us now consider how this can be done. Should society be just a sum, a totality, of the primary units ? It should be obvious that such a society would be as arithmetical and mineral, or nearly so as the one, like the present Western society' that is made up of the sum of individuals. Just as in the primary community a number of families come together and co-operate to build a common life, so in order that there may be society, the primary communities must come together and co-operate with other primary communities so as to tackle common problems and promote common aims. Such co-operation and co-ordination of activies will obviously be impossible between distant and very large numbers of primary communities : mutual intercourse is possible only between neighbouring communities. Therefore, the next step in the building up of an integrated society is for a number of neighbouring primary communities to come together and co-operate amongst themselves to build, let us say, a reginal community. Each single primary community will do all that may be possible with its internal resources. But there will be many things that will be beyond the resources and competence of the primary community. For instance, each primary community might be able to provide for a primary school, primary health services, small irrigation works, like wells and village tanks, and village industries. But, a number of primary communities must co-operate together in order to provide for a high school, an indoor hospital, a power station and servicing centre, larger industries, larger irrigation works, etc. Thus, the regional community comes into existence by an organic process of growth. The community circle is widened. It will be seen from this that the regional community is not a mere sum of the smaller communities constituting them. It is an integrated community in itself. In other words, at the regional level there is an integration of institutions and activities of the primary communities : the village *panchayats* are integrated into the regional *panchayat*; the

village co-operatives in the regional co-operative union; the primary schools in the regional high school; the village youth and cultural associations in the regional ones; the village plans in the regional plan, etc. Just as in its internal administration the primary community is autonomous, so in the spheres in which the primary communities have delegated their powers to the regional community, the latter is autonomous. (The need to delegate powers arises from the fact that the primary communities are unable by themselves to do everything that needs to be done). The regional community, however, is not a superior or higher body that can control, or interfere with, the internal administration of the primary communities. Each in its sphere is equally sovereign.

The regional community in its turn will do all that is within its competence. But, again, there will be many things which will be beyond its competence, such as running a techno-agricultural college, a major irrigation project, production of electricity, manufacture of machines, etc. In order that these tasks be tackled a number of regional communities will have to come together to form a still larger community—the district community, let us say. The district community too will be an integrated community and its relationship with the regional communities will be of a similar pattern to that of the latter with the primary communities.

In this manner the district communities in their turn would federate together to form the provincial community. The provincial communities would come together to form the National Community. A day might come when the national communities might federate together to form the World Community.

Two conclusions follow from the above. It should be obvious, in the first place, that as we proceed from the inner to the outer circles of communal life and organization, there is less and less to do for the outer communities; so that, when we reach the circle of the National Community, it has only a few matters to attend to, such as defence, foreign relations, currency, interprovincial co-ordination and legislation. This being so, it should be obvious, in the second place, that such a social organization offers the utmost scope for the 'people'—who are no longer an amorphous mass of human grains but organized in self-government communities—to govern themselves.

The communitarian polity that has been described above can

alone guarantee the participatory democracy which is our ideal and which should be the ideal of all democrats. It will only be in such a society that the individual will be able to save himself from the fate of 'robotism' to which modern civilizations has condemned him and find freedom and self-significance as a member of the community.

SHORTCOMINGS OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

There is a formidable volume of literature on parliamentary democracy—including in the term systems akin to it, such as the American presidential democracy. There is also a vast literature on the party system which appears in the wake of this type of democracy.

I believe, it would be fair to say that even the most ardent defenders of parliamentary democracy agree that it has serious defects. But they console themselves with the thought : (a) that there is no better alternative; and (b) that, within limits, it is possible to amend and improve it. No one will deny that the system is capable of much improvement and it is undergoing change all the time, though not always for the better. But no matter how much improved, its fundamental defects will yet remain because they are the very permises on which its entire structure has been raised.

The fundamental defect, from which other serious defects issue, is that this form of democracy is based on the vote of the individual. We have already examined this situation and found that it is the atomization of society that is responsible for this kind of political system. But that does not alter the fact that the system is based on a false premise; the State cannot be an arithmetical sum of individuals. The people, the nation, the community can never be equated with the sum of individual voters.

The partisans of parliamentary democracy claim that under it the government is at least representative of the majority of the voters, if not of the people. First of all this is not true. More often than it is commonly believed governments elected under universal adult suffrage are minority governments, in the sense that they represent a minority of the voters. Wherever there are more than two parties, this happens quite often, but even under two party systems, it is not a rare phenomenon.[4] At the last general

election in this country, for instance, minority governments were established in a majority of the states, i.e., in seven out of the thirteen states, excluding Union Territories.

It will not do to brush aside, as it has been done in this country, such serious anomalies and glaring defects in the parliamentary democratic system by the smug remark that such things are inevitable under a multi-party system. If such things are inevitable and if we are serious about democracy we must seriously set about to find a better type of democracy. The alternatives of plural constituencies, proportional representation, alternative vote cannot, even if there was general agreement about them, which there is not, take us far.

The claim that parliamentary democratic governments at least represent a majority of the voters breaks down in a still more serious manner. Experience has shown that present-day mass elections, manipulated by powerful, centrally-controlled parties, with the aid of high finance and diabolically clever methods and super media of communication, represent far less the electorate than the forces and interests behind the parties and the propaganda machines. It is only in the totalitarian countries that the 'rape of the masses' happens. The basic difference is that in a democracy there is a competition between the violators while there is no competition in totalitarianism.

Here we are face to face with another serious defect of parliamentary democracy—demagoguery. The need to 'catch' votes creates an unlimited opportunity for indulging in half-truths, even outright lies sometimes; for exciting the passions, more often than not, the base passions; for arousing false hopes by making dishonest, but pleasing promises. Hardly any issue of public policy is presented to the people in its true light; everything gets distorted by partisan demagoguery. The consequence of all this is that the real interests of the nation are sacrificed, more often than not, at the altar of demagoguery.

Perhaps the most serious fault of parliamentary democracy, from the point of view of democracy itself, is its inherent tendency toward centralism. At one extreme of its political spectrum is the nation state and at the other the individual voter, with a blank in between. The local bodies that may exist have : (a) little self-government powers, and (b) no direct or indirect influence on the nation state. Add to this the complexities of a highly industrialized

civilization that are beyond even the understanding of the ordinary citizen, and you have a central state of overwhelming power and resource and the individual voter reduced to abject helplessness. The 'sovereign people' being dispersed over the length and breadth of the country like particles of sand over the desert and having no other organized political force than the nation state itself to interpose between themselves and that state, the latter naturally becomes all powerful. The issue of power in such states is decided not by the fictitious 'people', but by a balance between political parties and such organized interests as industrialists and bankers and powerful labour unions. The people represent a wholeness, while the organized interests are sectional. Even a sum of the sections cannot make up the whole. Only their organic integration can do so. Such integration takes place only in the community—at its various levels. In the communal or communitarian democracy that we are advocating there are a natural decentralization and a multi-central pluralistic state.

A natural outcome of centralization of power and administration is bureaucracy. The central executive or cabinet is so overburdened with work that it is compelled to leave more and more to, and depend more and more upon, the permanent officials, who in course of time gather more and more power for themselves. This soon leads to a dangerous autocracy, the autocracy of the bureaucrat, which is difficult to fight because it 'works in the shadows' and is hard to get at. The only answer to the problem of bureacracy is more and more decentralization so that the people directly participate in the administration of their affairs and control the civil servants who owe their jobs and are directly responsible to them. This is exactly what will happen in the communitarian democracy outlined here. The communal administrations might make mistakes and there might be inefficiency. But as they themselves will be the sufferers, they will learn and improve things. Moreover, during the British rule did we not say to ourselves repeatedly that good government was no substitute for self-government ? Is that less true now ?

An inevitable concomitant of parliamentary democracy is the party system. So much has been written in criticism of this system that is seems unnecessary to dwell upon it here at any length. Some criticism of it has been implicit in what has been said above. It is clear that parliamentary democracy cannot work without

parties. Parties of a sort will perhaps exist everywhere and at all times. Even in the family there may be 'parties'. In the ancient Indian republics, which were aristocratic democracies, parties and factions were a common feature. But the highly organized, centralized mass parties of modern times are a far cry from the factions of old, whether of the ancient Indian republics or the Greek city states. The old democracies were small and the factions and the people were not so far removed from one another. The people therefore could judge them and the issues that were raised with intimate understanding. The issues in those days were also simple enough. All this has changed now and parties have become a sort of state within the State. They are now the real arbiters of the people's fate, whose control over them is fictional. The citizens who cast their votes for the parties have nothing to do with the running of the parties : they are complete outsiders. Even the enrolled members of the parties have no say either in the policy-making or the inner administration of the parties. The parties are run by caucuses that are beyond democratic control.

Party rivalries, we have seen above, give birth to demagoguery, depress political ethics, put a premium on unscrupulousness and aptitude for manipulation and intrigue. Parties create dissensions where unity is called for, exaggerate differences where they should be minimized. Parties often put party interests over the national interests. Because centralization of power prevents the citizen from participating in government, the parties, that is to say, small caucuses of politicians, rule in the name of the people and create the illusion of democracy and self-government.

No doubt the party system has its good points and because parliamentary democracy cannot work without it, those who swear by that type of democracy and see no alternative to it, are prepared to accept the evils of the party system as inevitable and satisfy themselves by pointing out their virtues. For my part, it is not the party system that is the main culprit, but parliamentary democracy itself, which gives it rise In the communitarian democracy that I have proposed here, there may conceivably be parties, but they are likely to be local factions, and, in any case, their role in the State will not be as commanding as that of the parties in the parliamentary system.

Another serious fault of parliamentary democracy is the system of election that it fosters and requires for its proper functioning.

First of all, the system is very expensive and appallingly wasteful. The fabulous expenses involved have the effect of mortgaging democracy to moneyed interests or large sectional organizations like trade unions. As compared with this, elections in the communitarian system would cost practically nothing.

It would have been a matter of some consolation if the huge expenditure had resulted in any public good. In fact, the result is just the contrary. A general election, as noted above, creates unnecessary passion and excitement; instead of educating and enlightening the people it befogs their mind; instead of resulting in the election of able and good men, it tends to favour demagoguery. Serious political and economic issues and other questions of policy, it is obvious, should be considered calmly and dispassionately and not in the heat of partisan warfare. That is why I hold that the practice of general elections should be abolished. The elected houses should be continuous in nature, with a part of them being renewed periodically.

Economy of the Community

This is not the place to deal at any length with the Economy of the Community. For that a separate paper would be necessary. However, a treatment of the polity would be incomplete without a brief description of the economy that would underlie it Society is a complex whole, as man himself is; and, therefore, social and human reconstruction requires an all-sided approach.

The aim of the community's economy is the welfare of the community and each of its members. Its aim cannot be individual profit, exclusive of the welfare of other individuals in the community. The community's economy is neither exploitative nor competitive : it is co-operative and co-sharing.

The community comprehends the whole of the man and is interested in his all-sided development. The life of the community is therefore balanced and not one-sided. The economy of the community must therefore be subordinate to and subserve, the aim of a balanced development of human life. Therefore, it cannot be an economy of unlimited wants, as it is in the existing society. The present 'science' of economics would be inapplicable to a balanced society. For it a new scienee of economics will have to be worked out. In this country Gandhiji and Shri J C. Kumarappa have laid the foundations of such a new economics.

The community is an enlarged family, and like the family it

represents the eternal flow of life. Just as the family is interested not only in its present members but even in those who are unborn, so the community thinks of future generations A balanced economy concerned with future generations of men, that is, with life rather than death, would try to do its best to return to nature what it takes from it. It will therefore try to restrict consumption as far as possible to renewable resources and use as little as possible of the resources it cannot put back. The economy of the community is in co-operative harmony with nature, while the present-day economy both of the West and East is at perpetual and destructive war with nature.

The economy of the community, further, should be as self-sufficient as possible The idea of self-sufficiency, in this age of international trade, strikes many as parochial, isolationist, reactionary. But for the community it is most natural. The primary concern of the community is to provide for satisfaction of the primary needs of its members. It is therefore, natural for it to produce all it can to provide for them food, clothing, shelter and other necessaries of life. It is also the community's responsibility to see that every able-bodied individual in the community finds useful employment. But, if the economic activities of the community are not primarily related to its needs, the community would be at the mercy of the market—not only national, but also the international market—which may spell unemployment and economic ruin for it. We have already seen in our discussion of the atomization of society how modern industrial organization has made the individual a helpless human grain ruled by forces which he neither understands nor can control. Therefore, it was pointed out that the institutions and processes of society must be adapted to the human scale and man must be made the master of his fate. Following that line of thought we arrived at the communitarian way of life. But, if having reached the community, we again reverse the process and make it subject to the domination of macro-economics, we would find ourselves exactly where we started from. There would be no other fate left for man but robotism.

Therefore, it is inescapable that in the economic sphere the community should, in the first instance, engage in activities that would be completely under its control. That is the sphere of production for self-consumption within the community. It is obvious that such production must, in the first place, be in the field of

primary needs of life.

The community would obviously have other than primary needs. No community would be able to produce all that it needs. Even in the sphere of necessities of life, every community may not be able to produce all that may be required. No community can be self-sufficient in everything. The question is how are those other needs to be satisfied ?

The economic life of the communitarian society would be so organized that human needs are satisfied as near at home as possible : first in the primary community, then in the regional, district, provincial, national and international community—in that ascending order. This means that each expanding area of community would be as self-sufficient as possible. Incidently, this would save much of the unncessary energy and time devoted today to the business of commerce, advertisement, etc.

This would naturally set the pattern for planning. Planning would begin from the primary community and therefrom fan outwards. In our scheme of things the regional plan, i e., the plan of the regional community, would be the pivotal plan. This would mean that the regional plan—and not the village plan, which would be too small for the purpose—would be the unit on the basis of which the whole national plan would have to be constructed. The existence of large, unbalanced cities would complicate communitarian planning, and necessary adjustments would have to be made. The towns would, of course, be integrated with the regional, and district communities. But, the integration of the cities would be difficult. It will be recalled that I have already suggested that as far as possible the cities should be reconstituted as federations of communities.

All natural resources would belong to the community. How they would be divided between the communities would be decided upon by common agreement Generally speaking each community would have possession of the natural resources that fall within its boundaries. But, there are resources that are unevenly distributed such as forests, mines, etc. These would have to be shared by all by common agreement.

It follows that land would belong to the community; and, in the nature of things, each primary community would own the land that falls within its area.

Great economic inequality is inconsistent with the spirit of

community Up to a point difference in income or wealth may be tolerable. Vinobaji gives a homely illustration to drive this home. He gives the example of the five fingers of the human hand They are unequal, but the inequality is reasonable; so that, in spite of it, the fingers can co-operate and work together But if the difference had been too great, so that one finger was only a few inches long while the next was measured in feet, the hand would have been utterly useless.

In the community, the position of the worker would be central, because it would be realized that work was the most essential thing required for the community. Without work the community could not exist. Therefore, every adult in the community would be a worker. At the same time, work would be a meaningful expression of human powers, rather than meaningless drudgery, because the worker would be a responsible participant in the work process. There would be no over-specialization tending to reduce the worker to an automation. Rather, the agro-industrial nature of the communal life would make it possible for him to follow a diversified occupation.

A few words about the organization of industry, commerce, etc. I have already stressed the agro-industrial character of the communities—as opposed to purely agricultural or purely industrial. I have also stressed the need for a new kind of technology, 'adapted to the scale of man'.

A social organization and technology of the kind proposed here would assure that the bulk of industrial and other economic institutions would remain confined within the region and district. There would be some institutions of provincial, and a few of national dimensions.

These institutions might be of the private, co-operative or communal type. In the primary, regional and district communities a large part, maybe the greater part, of industry and commerce would naturally be of the owner-worker type. The rest would be co-operative or communal. A few units might be of the private-employer-employee type. The provincial and national undertakings would be of the co-operative, communal or even private type.

Perhaps a word of explanation is necessary about the communal undertakings. They would be undertakings established by the communities and run either (a) by bodies set up for that

purpose by the communities concerned, and working with full participation of the 'employees'; or (b) by bodies directly set up by the employees themselves.

Self-government in industry, as in every other economic undertaking, would be a cardinal principle of the communitarian economy. In owner-worker units, the problem does not arise. Co-operatives formed only of producers also do not raise any problem in this regard. But in such undertakings, large or small, where there are employers, managers, technicians and workers—no matter who the employer may be—a joint body representing all the elements would be set up for internal self-government.

The idea of classes at war with each other is foreign to the communitarian order of society and opposed to the spirit of community. That spirit requires harmonization of interests, which is possible only on the basis of faith, sharing and acceptance of responsibility—the cardinal principles of community life. It follows that such things as strikes and lock-outs would be foreign to the communitarian way of life. Non-co-operation might be a possible course of action in extreme cases involving moral issues.

Every economic institution, no matter what its type, from the point of view of ownership, would be integrated with the community to which it territorially belongs. This means that its establishment and development would be in response to communal needs; that it would function according to conditions laid down by the community; and that it would be held responsible and accountable to the latter.

It means, further, that these institutions would also be organizationally integrated with the community. In the primary community, there would be no difficulty of integration—every institution would be directly integrated with the immediately present community. In the other communities some such pattern of integration as the following might answer the purpose. This, however, offers a wide field for experimentation.

In each communal area (region, district, etc.) each line of industry, or of other business, would be organized in an association representing owner-workers, other workers and owners, managers and technicians That is to say, in each region, district, province and the country there would be different associations of, let us say, iron-workers, carpenters, oil-men (or of their co-operatives), grain-dealers, factories making agricultural implements, batteries, etc.

These associations would be federated in each communal area into an Economic Council. In this manner, each region, district, province and the country would have its own Economic Council. The Economic Council of every community would advise and be represented in the communal political body concerned (the *Panchayat Samiti*, District Council, etc.)

The Associations and Councils would have powers to make rules to govern their activities and those of their member institutions, provided these rules did not conflict with the rules and laws of the community These Associations and Councils would be the modern *varna* organizations and their rules the modern *varna-dharma*.

A word about private enterprise. Private enterprise, in the sense of *purushartha*, individual's spirit of enterprise, would have fullest scope in the community. But, in the community the individual would be imbused with the spirit of community. Therefore, private enterprise in a communitarian society would also partake of that spirit and work for communal as well as private good. Further, private enterprise would also be subject to the principles of self-government and responsibility to and integration with, the community.

It may be asked if all this would not conflict with the directive principles of the constitution and the ideals of socialism to which Parliament stands committed. On the contrary, I feel emphatically that it would be only in the kind of society described here that those principles and ideals could find fulfiment.

Reconstruction of the Indian Polity

It is time now to gather all the threads of the argument and tie them together. Ancient Indian thought and tradition; social nature of man; social science; ethical and spiritual goals of civilization; the demand of democracy that the citizen should participate in the ordering and running of his life; the need of saving man from himself and from the fate of robotism; the requirement that the State and other institutions of society be reduced to a human scale; the ideal, above all, that man should become the centre of civilization—all these point in the same direction : to a communal or communitarian way of life; communitarian ethics and education; communitarian social, economic and political organization. In this paper I have been mainly interested in the political aspect

of the matter : shape of the political organization, or polity, most desirable for our country.

The foundation of this polity, as I have pointed out, must necessarily be self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial, urbo-rural local communities. The existing villages and townships provide the physical base for such reconstruction. A laudable beginning has been made in this connection by establishing *gram panchayats* and instituting such programmes as community development; 'intensive area' development (of the Khadi and village Industries Commission); and co-operativization of the rural economy. But from the point of view propounded in this paper these programmes suffer from several serious defects : (a) they lack an integrated social philosophy; (b) they have no clear concept of community; (c) they do not aim to create a balance within the community between agriculture and industry; (d) even though the aim is to create communities (no matter how vaguely understood) at the bottom level the concept of social organization at the higher levels remains the same as that of the atomized industrial society of the West (which for our purpose here includes Russia).

Let me deal briefly with each of these defects : (a) The social philosophy, granting that there is one, behind the country's development programmes may be said to have two parts : (1) the philosophy of economic development; (2) the philosophy of democratic socialism.

No one in this country will question the need for economic development. But should that development be without limits as in the West (again, including Russia) ? That philosophy, as we have seen, is incompatible with the outlook of community development and the communitarian order of society.

As for democratic socialism, there seems to be no clarity of thought. Democratic socialism in the West has come to mean, in practice though not in theory, state socialism. And if it has any philosophy, it is that of welfareism from the top and not of a socialist way of life lived in every home and neighbourhood. If socialism and welfareism from above are to be the ideals of our social reconstruction, development of the community at the bottom has neither any social significance, nor any chance of success. The base and the super-structure will contradict each other; and because the top will be all-powerful—as it must be under State socialism—the superstructure will undermine the base. It will be

remembered that the Soviet system had started out to be something of a communitarian system, but because the top became all-powerful, the bottom was crushed out of existence. There are no true Soviets in Soviet Russia—there is one monolithic State.

As I have shown above, socialist philosophy need not be opposed to the communitarian picture drawn here. But in that case, the socialists will have to be less interested in institutions and more in man. The old faith that state ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange plus planning will bring about socialism has been falsified. In its extreme form that faith led to Stalinism. But, a new faith has not been created to take the place of the old. For this the socialists will have to go to the pre-Marxian socialist idealists, the philosophical Anarchists; to Tolstoy, Ruskin and Morris; to the post-Marxian social idealists; to Gandhi and Vinoba. The 'communities of work' of France have a great deal to teach the socialists; and so have the kibbutzim of Israel and some of the *gramdan* villages of India. The socialists must also take from Marx what is still valid and from science the best it has to offer. This task will require a vast capacity for moral and intellectual synthesis, but the task has to be undertaken if socialism has to recapture its pristine inspiration and idealism. Marx, as Lenin pointed out, had synthesised German philosophy, French socialism and British classical economics to create his grand and noble structure of thought. Another moral and intellectual genius must arise to perform anew a similar creative act of synthesis so that socialism might become a faith for the future rather than one of the 'wasms' of the past.

(b) The concept of community is not clearly worked out. To the extent it is, it remains on paper : mainly for the reason that the task of 'development' of the community is given to paid 'servants' of the State who have generally no faith in, or understanding of community; and who themselves do not belong to any community. In the communitarian form of society the concept of belonging to a community is very important. In Switzerland, for instance, where the community still exists, every Swiss belongs to his home commune.

The official 'developers' of community have not such concepts of belonging, and that is one reason why their efforts do not go very far. It might be added here that though the Indian village is far from being a community, its inhabitants do have a sense of

belonging to their village and to one another. The programme of community development and the officers in charge of it do little in practice to strengthen this sense. This programme has been laying more emphasis on developing agriculture and industry and building schools, hospitals, community centres, approach roads, etc. than no developing the spirit of community. The latter is a more difficult task, but it has to be tackled to make community development meaningful. For this a clear picture of community has to be prepared and popularized—not because the official 'circular from above' requires it, but because of inner conviction.

The local community should be so developed that is becomes a miniature welfare state. Being the primary community it must take primary responsibility to provide work and shelter for every family; to organize production so as to fulfil the primary needs of food and clothing; to provide for primary education and primary health services The needy and the indigent should be a first charge on the community, and every earning member of the community, no matter where residing, must contribute his share to the primary social service needs of the community. Every family living in the community, while working for its own welfare must keep the welfare of every other family in view. The economic resources and activities of the village must have the welfare of the community as their first charge. It is these things that should signify community development above all else.

(c) The community development and other rural development programmes have no conception of balanced agro-industrial communities. There is no doubt that village industries are being developed but that is only from the point of view of tackling the unemployment problem and raising the living standards of the villagers. There is no idea behind the village industries programme of a new type of socio-economic organization; or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the idea behind it is that of an atomized society sharply divided between urban and rural sectors with the first dominating the second. Apart from all philosophical considerations of social reconstruction, it should be emphatically pointed out that if the latter concept of society persists, the villages of India are sure to be perpetuated as permanently depressed areas.

(d) The defect has already been partly considered in : (a) above. It was shown there that if the superstructure was to be

individualistic there was no meaning in trying to establish community at the base. In such a society the atmosphere of community will be lacking, without which it will be impossible to sustain the basic communities.

Let me elucidate this by taking an example. Let us take the political institutions. It is a common observation the village *panchayats* do not function as they were intended to. There may be several reasons for this. But I am sure that one of the most important reasons is the divisive influence of the existing atomistic polity. An attempt is being rightly made to see that *panchayat* elections are as nearly unanimous as possible and that parties do not project themselves into them and the villages function as communities. At the same time, at elections to higher bodies the same village communities are split again into individuals who have to line up behind conflicting parties. The result is that the community is disrupted and the *panchayat* is unable to function in the wholesome manner that every one desires.

It is the same with the economic and other institutions and activities. Our planning, for instance, does not begin with the village and the region and go upwards, but from the centre, going downwards. This does not help to develop the communities because they are not given an opportunity to plan for themselves as communities and then to co-ordinate their plan from level. The economic institutions, State or private, are also top organizations whose activities are in the nature of economic 'invasions' from outside the community, tending to dislocate and disintegrate the communal life, and so on and on.

So much about the defects of the present programme of community development. Let me return now to the foundation of our polity. The foundation, as stated already, must be self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial, urbo-rural local communities. The highest political institution of the local community should be the General Assembly—the *gram sabha*—of which all the adults should be considered members. The selection of the Executive—the *panchayat*—should be by general consensus of opinion in the *Sabha*. There should be no 'candidates', i.e., no one should 'stand' for any post. There should be clear-cut qualifications, as in ancient times, land down for all selective posts. No individual should hold the same post for more than a defined period of time. The *panchayat* should function through subcommittees,

charged with different responsibilities. There should be no official or member appointed or nominated by the State government in the *panchayat* or its subcommittees.

It my be questioned if there can ever be a general consensus of opinion amongst villagers who are divided into castes and factions and have conflicting interests. We have seen already how for thousands of years, the villages of India elected their executive councils by general agreement. Those villages were by no means homogeneous and ideal communities. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that the experience of centuries cannot be repeated again. We may also recall that the only alternative method of election of village councils or *panchayats* was that of drawing lots. There is nothing undemocratic in selection by lots. Therefore, I am emphatically of the view that the villages should be given an option to choose between the methods of selection by general agreement or by drawing lots or, alternatively, it might be provided that the villages first try the former method, and failing therein take recourse to the latter Something similar happens in the Bhoodan movement. When the landless families are unable to agree about the distribution of Bhoodan lands between themselves, the issue is decided by drawing lots. It is not our experience that there has been in any case dissatisfaction with decisions reached in this manner.

The question may also be asked if the village *panchayats*, as they are today, would be able to function in the manner visualized above. There is no better way to teach the young except by giving them responsibility. In the same manner the only way to make the villages self-governing, self-reliant and self-sufficient is to throw upon them real responsibilities. There was a time when the Indian village republics were self-created, like the Swiss communes, and their powers and functions were not given to them from above. But in the present conditions they have to be recreated by a deliberate and bold process of devolution and decentralization, if Indian democracy has to have a firm base and living reality. I believe that the responsibility given to the *gram sabha* and the *panchayat* should be in things that really do matter. For instance, it should be the responsibility of the *gram sahba* and the *panchayat* to ensure that no one in the village went without food, clothing and shelter; no child went without primary education; every one received primary medical care. The *sabha* and *panchayat* should

see that the village become self-sufficient in the matter of food and clothing as soon as possible. Further, they should so plan that within five years, let us say, thery was no unemployment in the village and every family reached a minimum standard of living. Self-government, to be real, should be about essential problems of life

It would be necessary for some time to help the village from above, but the responsibility must be clearly defined and the demand for help must come from the village in specific terms, meant to supplement what has been or is proposed to be done by the collective effort of the village. No help should be given until the village has proved that it has done and is prepared to do its best to help itself. Eventually such help will have to come from the next larger communal organization, the regional community, but at the beginning it will have to come from the State government. Social and political workers must go in large number to the villages, not to make promises but to preach selp-reliance and to help them to practise it.

The development of the rest of the polity need not wait till the villages and townships become real communities as visualized here. Our work must begin at all levels simultaneously, otherwise it will not succeed at any level.

The next level of the political structure would obviously be that of the regional community. Here, as already indicated, the *gram panchayats* will have to be integrated into the *panchayat samiti*, as recommended by the Balvantray Mehta Team, with this difference that the nature and functions of the *samiti* should be those of an autonomous self-governing community as discussed in the previous section : the *samiti* should have powers and obligations to do all that may be within its competence. As suggested already, the *panchayat samiti*, comprising the optimum community as defined above, would play a key role in the political and economic life of the country, particularly in the processes of planning and development.

There is one important point which I wish to emphasis in connection with the formation of the *panchayat samiti*. The *samiti* should be elected by the *gram panchayats* and not by their members. This at first might appear to be a distinction between six and half-a-dozen. But that is not so. We have here a major principle of communal life involved. It is the *gram panchayat* as a

body that represents the village community and not its members. The *panchayat samiti*, in its turn, is a representative of the *gram panchayats*, and it is the latter that should be represented as such and not their members.

Following the pattern of social organization described in the previous section, the political structure would rise storey by storey from the foundation. The next storey above the *panchayat samiti* would be that of the District Council (or whatever name be given to it), which will be formed by the integration of the *panchayat samitis* of the district—again the *samitis* as such electing their representatives and not their members. The district councils, in their turn, should have all the powers and obligations neccssary to do everything that may be within their competence.

In a similar manner all the district councils of a State would come together to create the State Assembly. The State Assemblies, in like manner, would bring into being the Lok Sabha. Thus, the political institution at each level is an integration of all the institutions at the lower level.

Before proceeding further I should like to point out that the foregoing discussion should show that the issue is not merely one of 'local' self-government, nor of direct or indirect elections. It would be wrong to suppose that if 'local bodies' were given more powers and the direct system of election were replaced with on indirect one, and the rest of the social organization were left as it is, the resultant would be the kind of polity that is being advocated here. The polity herein suggeted is not a graft on the existing body of society, but an organic part of a radically transformed social order.

My aim here is not to write a new Constitution for India. I have tried merely to discuss some underlying principles and to indicate the general pattern of the social and political organization. However, it may be useful to deal with a few points of details by way of further clarification.

First, let me take the question of the Executive at the different levels. At the Primary Community level the *panchayat* is the executive : it might allot different executive functions to its individual members or to small committees. At the Regional Community level, the *panchayat samiti* is the exceutive body and it would function through committees. At the level of the District Community, the District Council would be the executive body, and

it would also function through committees. At the level of the Provincial Community the *Pranta Sabha* would appoint committees which would be the executive bodies, responsible to the *Sabha.* Likewise, at the level of the National Community, the *Rashtra Sabha* would appoint committees which would be the executive bodies, responsible to the *Sabha*.

Who would exercise the legislative powers, it may be asked. According to my conception, each community has powers to make rules and laws in order to manage its internal affairs, provided they do not conflict with the interests of other communities at the same level and with the rules and laws laid down by the communities at higher levels The higher communal bodies will legislate in their allotted spheres. Rules and laws may be passed by other communal bodies too, such a educational and economic associations.

The committees should be small, workable bodies with powers to co-opt experts who would participate fully but without the right of vote. Each committee would have a chairman and a secretary, but, apart from performing the functions of their office, they would enjoy no special powers or privileges. Each committee would be directly responsible to the general body which would appoint it.

In order to co-ordinate the work of the different committees, there would be a Co-ordinating Committee, consisting of one representative from each committee; the representative may be the chairman, secretary or any member of the committee as decided upon from time to time by the committee concerned. The decisions of the Co-ordinating Committee would be binding on every other committee. Up to the district level, the co-ordinating committee would be the *panchayat*, the *panchayat samiti* and the district council, which would meet at fixed times.

Every committee would have collective responsibility. The representative communal bodies would meet periodically, but the committees would be in perpetual session Matters of policy would be decided upon, on the motion of a committee or an individual member, by the representative bodies concerned. The committees would execute the policies.

It should be clear from this that at the Provincial and National levels there would be no Ministers, Chief Ministers or Prime Minister as at present. As stated above, government would be conducted by committees of the representative bodies. The institution of Prime Minister and Chief Minister, which concentrates too

much power in the hands of single individuals is undemocratic and smacks of the gunpowder of totalitarianism. It further leads to such dangerous psychological developments as the 'hero-cult' or the 'cult of the individual'.

The President of the different representative communal bodies will have no administrative functions. But, it would be his responsibility to see that the representative body of which he is president functions properly and according to the rules laid down. He would also have extra-ordinary emergency powers in case of the breakdown of the democratic apparatus of the community concerned.

The President of the Rashtra Sabha, in addition to the powers mentioned in the last paragraph, would also be the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and responsible to the Sabha for the defence of the nation. He would be assisted by the Committee for Defence, of which he would be the chairman.

In their task of administration the Committees would be assisted by paid civil servants. At each level the civil servants would be appointed by the corresponding Authority created for that purpose by the representative body concerned and on terms laid down by the latter. This will be a sovereign right of the communities to appoint and dismiss their servants. At the level of the primary community the civil servant might be an honorary, part-time or full-time volunteer. Even at higher levels there might be honorary civil servants,

It should be pointed out here that because of the decentralized pattern of the social, political and economic organization, the administration would not be top-heavy and far-removed from the people as at present.

In the light of the above, it might be useful to turn for a moment to what is perhaps one of the most serious problems of the present day : the problem of bureaucracy and corruption. Some think that one solution of corruption is dictatorship. But even dictatorship is no solution of bureaucracy. On the contrary, we know that dictatorship breeds bureaucracy faster than other systems of government and, in the bargain, makes it all-powerful.

Even as regards corruption, it is not generally realized that there is corruption on a gigantic scale in the dictatorships—only its form is changed. Instead of corruption in the sense of bribery and like, there is grosser corruption in the form of lying, deceit, intrigue, terror, enslavement of the human mind, crucifixion of the

dignity of man. All this corrupts human life far more than bribery and similar things.

The only true solution of the problem both of bureaucracy and corruption is direct self-government of the people and direct and immediate supervision and control over the civil servants by the people and their elected organs. In the primary communities, as I have said above, there need be no paid civil servants. In the larger communities the civil servant would be directly under the control and supervision of the communal body concerned. Further it would obviously be in the interest of the communities to keep the cost of the administration as low as possible. So, there will be a natural check on proliferation of the bureaucracy. Thus, as self-government develops, the civil servant becomes either unnecessary or subject to the immediate elected authority.

There may, however, be one danger in all this. If the communal representative bodies and their members themselves become corrupt, there would be little check on corruption in this scheme of things I admit that it is quite likely that in the beginning it might will be so, but I refuse to believe that such a situation could last long. If the responsibility were really thrown upon the people so that they could see clearly that their suffering was due to the fact that they had chosen the wrong type of people to manage their affairs, the relationship between the people, their representatives and civil servants would be so intimate and direct that it should not take long for the people to remedy the situation.

In this connection it might be observed that it would be worthwhile to give serious thought to the qualifications of representatives and civil servants. Dr. Bhagwan Das in his *Notes on the Outline Scheme of Swaraj* has devoted a whole section to the question of qualifications for legislators I think his views deserve serious consideration. Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that ultimately it is the good sense of the people themselves that can guarantee that their representatives and servants would be of the right sort.

It is possible in this paper to consider what departments of administration are to be entrusted to which community. I have emphasised the general principle that every community would have powers to do all that may be within its natural competence. Since there is general inertia among the people at present, this may not be much. Powers would have to be 'given' from above. I should

therefore say that I would take courage in both hands and give to the communities the utmost powers possible. Some of the powers might not be used, some might be abused. But, the people would learn and it would be the job of the voluntary social workers to help them to learn.

I should therefore say that police, justice, taxation collection, social services, planning, should all be decentralized to the maximum possible extent. As the people learn and acquire self-confidence, the process of decentralization, instead of starting from above, would be normalized and begin to operate from below.

A new political structure like the one envisaged here will not be built in a day, if for nothing else, for the reason that the foundation will have to be laid first and the structure built from below, storey by storey. The economic structure too would have to be built along with it. All this would take time, so there will have to be a period of transition.

Village *panchayats* have been established in the greater part of the country. These have to be remodelled according to the principles put forward in this paper. The next stage would be the establishment of *panchayat samitis.* This has been also started already, such as in Rajasthan. But again the conception behind it has to be radically changed. When *panchayat samitis* are established, the District Councils would have to be constituted. The economic institutions would also have to be organized side by side. Planning and the whole system of education would have to be re-oriented.

I have advocated the selection of village *panchayats* by common agreement or drawing of lots. Naturally, there is no scope for political parties to play any role in this process. As a matter of fact, even under the present system of election two major parties of the country have already agreed not to set up party candidates for village *panchayat* elections. I purpose that the principle be extended by law to the higher bodies too—up to the District Councils in the first instance. Under an indirect system of election, when the primary electoral units—the village *panchayats*—have a non-partisan character, there would be no sense in introducing parties into elections to the *panchayat samitis* and district councils. Besides, partisanship militates against the spirit of community that we wish to create and the process of harmonization that we wish to introduce into the life of society.

At the same time the party system exists and there are parties whose main function is to fight elections. Obuiously, therefore, a compromise will have to be made.

The first step should be for the parties to reach an agreement that the village *pancayats*, the *panchayat samitis* and the district councils, wherever they are constituted, would be scrupulously kept out of elections.

The appropriate electoral colleges not being in existence, it would have to be the individual voters who would participate in elections. But, as a compromise, I purpose that instead of parties setting up candidates, the voters themselves should be enabled to do it. A year ago I had made a similar proposal in a speech to Members of Parliament on 23 September 1958. This is what I had said :

> Suppose in a constituency, let us say there are 300 booths. For each booth, let us say, there are 2,000 voters. Before the elections, for the purpose of setting up of candidates, let meetings of the voters be held in each booth area, not necessarily at the station where the booth is going to be established, but at any convenient place in the booth area. Let the voters meet and let them elect two delegates as they do in Yugoslavia. There is nothing sacred about the number. I am making a suggestion. Let them elect two delegates by normal democratic procedure and majority votes. Then, afterwards, let all these delegates, may be 600 of them, hold a conference and let the nomination of the candidates be made at this conference. Let there be a law regulating that anyone can propose a name and second the name. The law may lay down that anyone whose name has been proposed and seconded, if he receives a certain percentage of the votes, 25 per cent, 30 per cent or more—whatever be the number—is nominated as candidate by the delegates of the voters. Then those delegates do their campaigning. Before the selection of those delegates let no party go into the field and say, 'So and so must be nominated'. No names should be mentioned. Let all the parties go to educate the public as to what sort of people should be nominated what kind of policies, programmes—agrarian, industrial, foreign or whatever it is—should be followed. Let every party go and try to educate the public. If the parties perform

merely the educative functions, they have a very wide function to perform in society. Let them do that in the pre-nomination period. After the nomination, because we have the party system let us make a compromise. . . . Suppose the delegates' conference has nominated three candidates or four candidates, let the parties choose out of those candidates and decide to give their support to one or the other just as parties decide about individuals. These are candidates of the people. They have been put up by the people of the constituency not by any party caucus, whether it is a local caucus or a State caucus or the All-India caucus. They are the nominees of the people. Then their names again go to the people for their votes. I think that if this practice were followed much of the evils of this party system would be remedied. Maybe a new avenue would be open to us to experience new forms of democracy

After the election, the members of the Legislature concerned would elect by majority vote a leader, who would be Prime Minister or Chief Minister. He would then form his cabinet.

This is merely a proposal for the transition. Any other method might be followed keeping in view the picture of the new polity.

The picture drawn here of the polity for India, and of social organization in general, might perhaps appear to be idealistic. If so, I would not consider that to be a disqualification. An ideal cannot but be idealistic. The question is if the ideal is impractical, unscientific or otherwise ill-conceived I have tried in the preceding pages to show that all relevant considerations lead irresistibly towards it.

The achievement of this ideal would, however, be a colossal task. Thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of voluntary workers would be needed over a number of years to accomplish it.

The governments should lend their full support; but it is necessary to remember that the main burden of the task would have to be borne by voluntary political and social workers and institutions. The heart of the problem is to create the 'spirit of community', without which the whole body politic would be without life and soul. This is a task of moral regeneration to be brought about by example, service, sacrifice and love Those who occupy high places in society—in politics, business, the professions —bear the heavy responsibility of leading the people by personal

example.

The task also is one of social engineering, needing the help of the State; of scientists, experts, educationists, businessmen, experimenters; of men and women; of young and old.

It is a task of dedication; of creation; of self-discovery.

It is a task that defines India's destiny. It spells a challenge to India's sons and daughters. Will they accept the challenge ?

Notes and References

1. Maurice Duverget, *Political Parties*, (London, 1954), pp. 424-25.
2. Ibid.
3. H B. Mayo, *Democracy and Marxism*, (London, 1955), p. 256.
4. In this way the 'minority' states were Bihar (Congress . 44.47 per cent); Bombay (Congress . 48 66 per cent), Kerala (Communist : 37.48 per cent); Madras (Congress 46 52 per cent); Orissa (Congress : 40.01 per cent); Uttar Prades (Congress : 46 29 per cent); West Bengal (Congress 49.20 per cent).

16

REVOLUTION ON THE AGENDA

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Gandhiji was an incarnation of voluntarism. His whole political, social and moral philosophy was based on the individual performing his duty in the best manner possible individually and also combining with other individuals towards solving the problems of the community, of society and the nation. Thrughout his life, he established voluntary organizations and conducted them with the greatest possible interest in every detail of their activities.

He had a very clear picture in his mind as to what he wanted. He wanted to create a new India. He wanted to change the system and the existing social order in India so as to bring about a social revolution. The word 'revolution' in this context only means that society has to change from its roots and its foundations, not merely outwardly but in a fundamental way. He wanted to construct a new society, which he called 'Sarvodaya Society', From time to time during his own life, Gandhiji had himself elaborated on this word, Sarvodaya This was a society fundamentally different from the one we have; even after twenty-two years of Independence. This was a society in which there would be equality—economic, social and political, a society in which there would be no exploitation; a society in which people would manage their own affairs; a society in which the State would perform as few functions as possible, and in which people would largely look after themselves It would be a self-regulated society. These were the objectives of

Independence as Gandhiji saw them. He said in Calcutta on 15 August 1947 that the Independence or Swaraj that had come was not the Swaraj for which he had fought. The Swaraj was yet to be achieved.

How are we going to do all this ? How can we bring about a social revolution and the reconstruction of society ? The two processes go side by side, and how can one do this in a non-violent manner ? Gandhiji's answer was Voluntary Action.

Gandhiji paid small attention to the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. Somebody wrote to him that though the Constitution of India was being written there was nomention in it of *Ram Rajya* which he always preached as the foundation of Swaraj. He wrote in *The Harijan* just forty days before he was assassinated that if this was so it was deplorable. He well knew that it was not the Constituent Assembly which could build the country from the bottom, but that this would have to be done by the people themselves. This could not be done by legislation or by a planning commission.

II

Now, many of us are engaged in numerous kinds of useful activities. If this work is multiplied, a hundred-fold, a thousand-fold or even a hundred-thousand-fold, what will happen ? Would a new society be created ? No. But that does not mean that Gandhiji was not thinking of activities such as those engaged in by the various organizations represented here. Gandhiji considered constructive work to be a preparation for social revolution and for social change. He considered constructive work as a discipline for non-violent mass action. He had written at a number of places on the objectives of constructive organizations like the All-India Village Industries Organization and others which he had himself set up. The objective of constructive organizations and constructive work is not to give employment to people. It is not to add a few paise to the pockets of the poor. These are incidental. The real objective is to create a non-violent society. All the activities that we are engaged in are essential from the point of view of mass contact in society. They are essential for creating a moral sanction or even a social sanction in society. They are essential for something that has to be done on the basis of the work that all of you

have been doing. As I have understood it, Gandhiji's technique had two main part.

It had a third part also which many of you might consider the most important part. I do not think it is most important part. However, this part in itself is very important, and like a *Brahmastra*, is to be used when all other moral means have failed If you read the *Mahabharata*, you will find that it is not every time a soldier goes to battle that he uses the *Brahmastra* ; it has to be used in the most exceptional conditions.

What are the two important parts of Gandhiji's method of social change and social reconstruction ? One is what we are doing by setting up social service organizations, which Gandhiji called constructive work organizations, manned by people who are motivated by the spirit of service, idealism and the love of humanity. If we have constructive social service organizations with a view to achieving Gandhian results, then these constructive workers or social workers would also believe in the philosophy of non-violence. But not non-violence as a matter of expediency as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru or Rajen Babu [Rajendra Prasad] or Maulana Azad or Sardar Patel saw and used as a weapon to fight the British Empire After that objective had been gained, they had no use for non-violence as a revolutionary philosophy of life.

The modern, structure of society is very unjust. In the name of law and order, so much injustice is being perpetuated. The rule of law and government by law, are all very fine phrases. What do we find after twenty-two years of Independence ? Human beings by the million are living as pigs. In the great cities of Calcutta and Bombay people literally pick up food from the gutter. Law and order has to be maintained so that these people do not break a few shop windows and seize the food displayed there. This is not the conception of a non-violent order of society. If all talk of non-violence and peace is in support of the *status quo*, if the Gandhian philosophy is always used to support the *status quo*, I cannot imagine a greater injustice to Gandhiji. Therefore, it becomes very necessary to see that hundreds and thousands of people who have faith in this revolutionary vision and philosophy are organized in constructive, social-service organizations. Their activities are to be co-ordinated. This was the first part of Gandhiji's method. Let us go to the people. It is not by sitting in Parliament here and by

legislating there that you will create a new India. The new India will have to be created by the bare hands of the people Therefore, Gandhiji wanted hundreds of people to take up this work.

Gandhiji said that he wanted that every individual should have all his primary needs fulfilled—enough clothing, a decent house to live in, education for his children, medical care for the sick and disabled in the family, and equal opportunity for employment. These five primary needs of every man should be met in whichever community he lives, Even in the United States of America no one can say whether these five basic requirements have been met so far as the individual is concerned, though it is the richest society in the world today. You go and see how people live in the ghettoes in the U S.A , in the *bustees* around Calcutta, in the *jhuggis* and *jhompdis* around Delhi and the *jhompdis* in Bombay. Recently I visited *jhompdis* around Bombay and I was shocked to see the conditions in which the people live there I is terrible. Gandhiji did not want everyone to go about in a loin cloth. He wanted everyone to have a full life. He also wanted that as a moral virtue, as a social duty, everyone should voluntarily place a limit on his own wants. Otherwise, if unlimited wants are to be pursued, then human society will be destroyed; we will land ourselves in disaster.

You have established individual contact; you have won the confidence of the people. Then at that moment, it is necessary to place before the people a programme for non-violent mass action. Society cannot change in bits. There has to be a mass revolution, mass movement and massive change. Many people ask : why don't you show us an example or model of a *Gramdan* village or a Sarvodaya village ? We say it is just impossible. This is not what we are after. This cannot be done. Why do you not ask the Socialists to give us a model ? Why do you not ask the Communists to give us a model ? They tell you 'unless we capture the State, we will not be able to build up society', and that appeals to you. We say that by creating models we will never succeed in changing society. One farmer may learn from another and grow twice, thrice or four times as much as he is growing, and if somebody underwrites the risks involved or assures him that there are no risk involved, he will undoubtedly follow the other man But if we have a colony in which people are leading a new way of life, have given up proprietary rights, follow the principle of trusteeship

and treat property as a trust, develop a shared way of life with everybody contributing something to the community for the good of the whole, then you will seldom find that the community next to it will accept it as an example. Though many things are contagious and spontaneous, sometimes, somehow goodness is not equally contagious.

The third part of the Gandhian technique—if that word could be used—was the most effective weapon Gandhiji had. It was his unfailing weapon. It was the *Brahmastra*. He did not call it that. I am calling it so. This was *Satyagraha* which includes both non-violent resistance and non-violent non-co-operation. This *Bhahmastra* is not to be used as our political parties are using and vulgarizing it for everything on earth, without creating a climate for it, without moral justification behind it and without creating the spiritual background for it.

III

If we are thinking of voluntary action in terms of celebrating the Gandhian spirit then we must understand how Gandhiji himself looked upon voluntarism and voluntary organizations and how he wanted that all these voluntary activities and the force, the spirit and strength created by them must converge on the point where there is mass action. If Gandhiji had thought from the very beginning that the kind of community he wanted to create should be evolved by the traditional methods of democratic politics and if he had thought of it consistently, nobody would have been able to prevent him from becoming the Prime Minister. The country would have given him support in full measure.

What I am trying to drive at is this. Whether we are doing our work as Gandhian constructive workers or as other social workers, we are all voluntary workers. We are leaving to the politicians, to the State and to the Government the main task of building up this country and of changing it. It is there that we go wrong. I have almost come to the conclusion that it is not possible to bring about a social revolution changing society from its roots—by democratic means. The democratic socialists have been in power in some countries in the West for quite some years. The longest period that they have been in power is in Sweden. Yet in spite of the fact that the socialists have been in power continuously

for years and years, basically Swedish society continues to be a capitalist society and will remain so.

What are the revolutionary changes that have taken place in India since Independence ? Only two changes have seeped down to the roots of the Indian society. One is the abolition of princedom and the other the abolition of the zamindari system. Zamindari has been destroyed from the roots. But for the rest, feudalism has firmly entrenched itself especially in ex-zamindari areas and a capitalist society has come into being, in spite of all the talk of socialism and communism. Though the roots of feudalism have been destroyed with the destruction of the princely order and the zamindari order, no socialist society has come into being during the past twenty-two years. Feudalism is entrenched in the rural society. It is everywhere—in U.P., in Bihar—except, perhaps, in the ryotwari areas where it takes a different form. But, it does exist there too, though not in the same virulent from as elsewhere. Even if you nationalize, capitalism is there. In nationalizing, what do we do ? Is there any basic fundamental change in the public sector except the change in ownership and, therefore in the distribution of surplus of profit ? Except for that, what is the status of labour ? What about industrial relations ? This is not socialism. This is bureaucratism. There is no fundamental change. I have begun to doubt very seriously whether any Government is going to bring about a radical social revolution in India through democratic means. When the first non-Congress Government came to power in Bihar, I made some proposals to those people. During those ten months, not an inch of progress was made towards any of these things.

And let me give you just one little example to show how this democratic method is defeated. A law passed by the Bihar Legislative Assembly and later on by the Council in 1950. That law was called the Privileged Persons Homestead Tenancy Act. This Act created a new kind of tenancy—homestead tenancy. If a Harijan had his little hut, mud-hut or even leaf-hut or straw-hut on a plot of land, then this legislation gave him occupancy rights in that little plot of land and a little area around it. If he was paying his landowner any rent he continued to pay rent. He would not become the proprietor, but would become a homestead tenant and would be secure in the enjoyment of that little hut of his.

Now you go to Bihar. Every day evictions are taking place.

If the landowner becomes angry with his labourer, the first thing he does is to drive him out of his hut. It takes him no time to destroy the hut and then he has the field ploughed over so that there is no sign of the hut left on the field. This is happening every day in Bihar though the law has existed for the last twenty years During the tenure of the non-Congress Government, I told them: 'Please to something about this, for Heaven's sake'. Formerly, the law required that the man occupying the hut would have to make an application. Later, the rules were amended and he did not have to apply. The officer, concerned could *suo motu* put on record that plot so and so with its particular measurements was in the name of such and such a man. Once, it is in the revenue records it would be secure. Many people are not aware of this. If this kind of injustice has not been corrected in twenty years in spite of this legislation, what do you expect to happen ?

Take the case of share-croppers. We hear about the Naxalites. I have every sympathy with the Naxalbari people They are violent people. But I have every sympathy with them because they are doing something for the poor. There is some limit to the patience of the people. Why cannot the question of share-croppers be settled ? The law gives them certain rights. After they cultivate a piece of land for so many years, they get occupancy rights and they cannot be evicted. But in Bihar and Bengal the landowner is free to evict them, and he does evict them. What do you think is happening in Purnea and other areas ? Thousands of share-croppers are being evicted because the landowners have the right to resume the land; because these poor people do not have even a "chit" to prove that the land was in their cultivating possession. They cannot cannot prove it in a court of law. These things are happening today and the law is absolutely impotent to help these poor people.

If the law is unable to give to the people a modicum of social and economic justice, if even whatever is on paper is not implement, what do you think will happen if not violence erupting all over ? Do you think that mere *mantras* of *Shanti, Shanti,* are going to save the situation or the political parties which are responsible for this legislation ? The very people who pass these laws have seen to it that the law are not implemented.

In the Bihar Ministry [1967], the first place, there was the Jan Sangh which, apart from other aspects of its polities, is conservative

in social and economic matters. I was Chairman of a Committee set up by the Bihar Government to implement the things which I had suggested to them. In that Committee, both the Jan Sangh and Raja Bahadur Kamakhya Narain Singh said: "The contract between the share-croppers and the others is a private contract; it is a sacred contract and the State has no right to interfere.' This is the plea they put forth in that Committee. There are all kinds of laws regarding contracts. I don't know from where these people got this idea about a contract between an elephant and a mouse. Is it such a sacred contract that the community has no right to protect the mouse? The congress party is in power in many States. The Congress also swears by some kind of socialism. I have not been able to understand the socialism of the Congress yet. But, whatever it is, it has to be shown at the ground level; some result has to be shown.

In Bihar, the Gandhi Centenary Seminar recommended only two programmes. One programme was that homestead land should be made secure during the Gandhi Centenary year, by 31 March, 1970. The other was that drinking water facilities should be created where they do not exist

Is this asking for the moon? I find that the people are losing hope and they feel that nothing will come out of any Government. When I see the situation in Bihar I also begin to share their feelings. One after the other, changes in the Government have taken place but nothing has changed. With all the programme and activities in this Gandhi Centenary year, if the problems of the people are not solved democratically, what other recourse will the people have except violence? Therefore, I say, what India needs today on her political agenda is non-violent social revolution Not only from the moral point of view but also from the practical point of view, this is one of the essential items on the political agenda of India today. Otherwise, violence will grow. I don't care about the Naxalite movement. This is going to grow. If Gandhiji had not been born, then perhaps we might not know how else we could do this. My Sarvodaya friends and my Gandhian friends will be surprised to read what I publicly say now. I say with a due sense of responsibility that if convinced that there is no deliverance for the people except through violence, Jayaprakash Narayan will also take to violence. If the problems of the people cannot be solved democratically I will also take to violence. I am raising

these fundamental questions because, otherwise observation of the Gandhi Centenary is meaningless. I am not interested in it unless we do something to change the social order. All the work that we are doing now should be looded upon is preparatory work.

IV

I have been a student of revolutions because I was a Marxist myself My interest in the history of revolutions is as keen today as it ever was. My conclusion after a study of violent revolution is that a violent revolution does bring about a revolution in the sense that it uproots the old social order and destroys it from its foundation Therefore, it is looked upon as a successful revolution. But, it fails in achieving the objectives for which the revolution is made. The French Revolution was a great revolution. After that many revolutions have taken place. There was the American Revolution. Undoubtedly for feudal system was destroyed from its roots.

But what came out of these revolutions ? After the revolutions, the power still was not with the people. The power did not go to the people; to the dispossessed. In Russia the revolution took place on November 7, 1917. Undoubtedly the foundation of Czarist feudalism was destroyed. Lenin said : 'All power to the people, to the Soviets, the workers, to the soldiers and peasants.' Soviet Russia is a great power, but there power is not in the hands of the Soviets. The power is in the hands of a small number of people. The Chinese Revolution took place in 1949. I think Mao Tse-tung did not want to bluff anybody. He openly said that power grows out of the barrel of the gun. It is absolutely true. But in China who holds the gun today ? The people do not.

I find man is enslaved everywhere in society wherever violent revolution has taken place. Last year in Paris [1968] a revolution took place and it was led by the students and some teachers and later joined by some of the working class. What did they seek ? All of them were students and they were not tools of any organized political parties. They said : 'We have been completely disillusioned with every kind of delegated authority. We have no faith in any Deputy. We have no faith in any of the institutions which are supposed to govern in the name of the people.' Then, what did they want ? They said : 'We want power at the work place (on echo

of Gandhism) : in the Universities, power with the students and faculty; in the factories, power with the workers, the technicians the engineers, the managers and the rest of them; in the villages power with the people on the farms.' They want power at the work place. If these French revolutionaries use the means of violence, they will never be able to establish power at the work place. They will only be able to destroy to power structure that exists today in the field of economics, politics, etc. If they use violence, in France or elsewhere, something else will take its place, which will not be power at the work place. This is my fear.

Now, why do I say all this ? As a result of the experience of democratic societies in other parts of the world and of demacratic government in our own country, I have begun to doubt on the one hand whether social revolution can be brought about by democratic means and, on the other, I reject violence as only half the revolution. The more important half of it is the betrayal of the people.

I don't want power for myself; I want power for the people. Therefore, I cannot support the Naxalities and I hope to persuade them at some point of time or the other. If they want power for themselves and for the the Communist Party, Marxist—Leninist, then it is all right and let them do what they wish. But I would not agree with this. Shri Jyoti Basu said at a recent workers' meeting in Calcutta : 'I want factories to be given to the workers.' I would like to know in which Communist country the factories belong to the workers. Not a single factory belongs to the worker in any Communist country except, in some respects, in Yugoslavia which the other Communists do not accept as a proper communist country. The factories belong to the State. They dupe the workers. They say, 'the State belongs to you', as if the workers can do anything with the State. This is the kind of dictatorial set-up that we find in the Communist countries. Where do we go ? It is here that Gandhi had something to say.

V

Nowadays in India there is a conscious effort to denigrate Gandhiji and his ideals. There is an organized effort to say 'What is all this talk of Satyagraha, what is Gandhiji's contribution in

bringing freedom to India, how is he responsible for that', etc. As one who had participated in the struggle, I make bold to say that if Gandhiji had not created a mass awakening and sustained it over a period of twenty-seven years, I don't think it would have been possible to raise the Azad Hind Fauj under leadership of Netati. Today, we hear that in Ludhiana or somewhere a statue of Gandhiji was blackened. After all, Gandhi was murdered in this capital of India.

Gandhiji was asked : 'You do this constructive social work. You take up a programme and make a countrywide propaganda and campaign for the purpose of converting the people to your scheme. If some people refuse to be converted what will you do ? Will you go on trying to convert everyone till doomsday ?' Gandhiji said : 'Certainly not.' He explained : 'If I am convinced that I have done enough and there are still some people who refuse to be persuaded then I will use my unfailing weapon of non-violent non-co-operation.' This *Brahmastra* is to be used as a part of the strategy of a vast movement of change and reconstruction. Therefore, I say that we should give some thought to this—how all of us can join hands together in fashioning one simple programme like the Salt Satyagraha ?

There should be one simple programme of mass action which we can place before the people from today and then go no converting and persuading the people to launch a mass movement of change in a non-violent way. A non-violent revolution, unlike a violent revolution, cannot take place just in ten days. John Reed wrote a famous book : *Ten Days that Shook the World*. It is not like that. A non-violent movement develops step by step and it, therefore, takes time.

I think it was given to Vinobaji's genius to find out that the constructive organization in the field were losing the spirit and losing their perspective and were slowly getting tied to the chariot wheels of this big *Juggernaut*, the State of India, because one has to go to it for this subsidy or that grant-in-aid. In that case, we will end up by merely becoming good people who perform some kind of service without being able to change society. I do not think that any political party can do it by winning elections alone. Vinobaji, instead, laid emphasis on constructive work organizations already in the field set up by Gandhiji. He also launched a programme of *Bhoodan* to which people responded. In a country like

India redistribution of land is absolutely essential as a measure of social and economic justice. The problem of fragmentation is not difficult to solve. It could be solved by consolidation of holdings. It could be solved by co-operative agriculture. When you have a society in which there is scarcity of land and many people, with 85 or 90 per cent of the people living in the villages and depending on agriculture ; if you have a situation where a few people own hundreds of thousands of acres and the rest, millions of them, are landless, then truly it is an explosive situation. You have an unjust situation. Many people laughed at *Bhoodan* and said it was a failure. I do not think you are aware of the programme in all its aspects You may not have taken the trouble to find out the facts about *Bhoodan*. It has been a failure in the sense that it has failed to solve the problem of landlesseness. But let me tell you frankly that the problem of landlessness is insoluble in India. Nobody can solve it because our population is too vast. Therefore, along with khadi and village industries, there should be a widespread network of small rural industries. But to the extent to which land redistribution has been effected in India, many times more acreage of land has been redistributed by *Bhoodan* than by legislation. This is true of almost every State except West Bengal from whose Secretariat I do not have the figures.

Jawaharlal Nehru always laid emphasis on question of land reform, redistribution of land and security for tenants. These three things always figured in his letters to Chief Ministers and also in his speeches. In spite of that, in my State [Bihar], even though the ceiling law was passed, not one acre of land was redistributed as a result of surplus being declared over the ceiling. Not one acre was redistributed, whereas we have been able to distribute 3,65,000 acres of land which are fit for cultivation. We have rejected as unfit for cultivation about 16,00,000 of acres in Bihar. In U.P. not more than 10,000 to 12,000 acres of land have been redistributed through legislation; but 3,10,000 acres through *Bhoodan*. Recently I went to Bombay. This is a ryotwari area and I wanted to know the position. I got the figures from the Secretariat. The Revenue Department wrote to me a letter saying that as a result of the Ceiling Act they were expected to get surplus land totalling 1,29,000 acres. But in Maharashtra we have redistributed 1,06,000 acres of land. This is the social and economic change brought about by *Bhoodan*. No amount of Khadi work, no

amount of work among the delinquent or among handicapped children or nutrition programmes is going to bring about social change.

Now we have launched *Gramdan*. We should look upon ourselves as a voluntary organization, and Gandhiji was an incarnation of voluntarism. But this is where he wanted where his voluntarism to begin. You see now the French Revolutionaries are talking of decentralization. But when a Gandhian talks of decentralization, immediately our learned people in the Delhi University, in the Planning Commission and in the Government of India turn round and say : 'In this age of technology, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, do you think that decentralization is possible ?' France is one of the two most highly technologically-developed countries of western Europe, next only to West Germany. Yet the French are talking of decentralization. If the dimensions of our social, economic and political institutions are beyond human scope, then man is going to be crushed under the *Juggernaut* organization, under over-mechanization. The students in Western Europe are revolting against exactly this very corruption of civilization in which the autonomy of the individual is being completely suppressed. Gandhiji has said that man is the supreme consideration for him. He wanted the highest possible moral, material and physical development of the individual human being. He begins from there. If we don't believe in the machine, if we don't believe in organization, but if we believe in man and in the dignity of man, then let us take a second look at Gandhiji and during the Gandhi Centenary Year let us take up projects for understanding man better. In this Centenary Year, we have to snatch the initiative from the hands of politicians, from Parliament and the Legislatures and give it back to the people. This is our job.

17

TOTAL REVOLUTION

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

I

Since independence, there has been no real change in the social, economic and political structure of our society. Zamindari is abolished, land reform laws have been passed, untouchability has been legally prohibited, and so on. But, the village in most parts of India is still in the grip of the higher castes and the bigger and the medium landowners. The small and the marginal landowners and the landless, the backward classes and the Harijans—these form the majority in most villages in most states, perhaps in nine-tenths of India. Yet their position continues to be miserable. Harijans are still burnt alive. The Adivasis are still the most backward section, barring the Harijans. And the money-lenders (who include many landowners and shopkeepers, may be petty themselves) mercilessly cheat and exploit the Adivasis, who in Bihar call the plainsmen *dikku*.

Some industries, banks, life insurance have been nationalized. Railways were nationalized long ago. New large public-sector industries have been established. But all this adds up to state capitalism and inefficiency, waste and corruption. State capitalism means more power to the state, mainly the state bnreaucracy or what Galbraith aptly calls 'the public bureaucracy'. There is no element or trait of socialism in all this. The working class and the public or, let us say, the people have no place in all this except

as workers or consumers. There is no economic democracy, which is so much talked about, nor even industrial democracy. This does not mean that I am opposed to socialism. It is only because I am so deeply concerned about socialism that I am pointing all this out. It is a pity that our socialists very largely equate socialism with nationalization.

The educational system in spite of several committees and commissions remains basically what it was during British rule : class education designed as an escalator to reach the top. There is so much to say about this, but this is not the place. Here I am trying only to show that the structure of society has remained unchanged through the years since independence.

The customs, manners, beliefs, supersitions, all these remain much the same for the masses. Even among the classes the change is superficial in most parts.

Since independence there has been a steady decline in political, public and business morality.

If we take social and economic development, the picture is frightful. Population growth goes racing forward. Poverty is also growing : more than 40 per cent of the people are below the poverty line. The barest necessities such as drinking water, man-worthy and not cattle-worthy housing, medical care, apart from food and clothing, are not available. Schools are few and the teaching is bad. The papers say today that Bihar is the richest state in the country in minerals. Bihar also has good land and perennial rivers Why then is Bihar, the poorest state in India ? Well, one could go on adding to the list.

The question is, can the picture be fundamentally altered through the ordinary democratic process ? Even if the Opposition wins, will the picture change ? I fear, no, laws will be passed and applied, moneys will be spent—even if all this is done, possibly without corruption creeping in, will the structure, the system, the 'order' of our society change ? I think, no, Why ?

Before, I answer let me elucidate what I mean by a few examples. Take the marriage customs, particularly the *tilak* and *dahez* system, prevalent in Bihar, Bengal, U.P. and some other states. This evil has been sought to be corrected by law, but the law has been a dead letter. Meanwhile the disease is growing fast, ruining many families and ruining the lives of many girls. Castes that had till the other day been free of this evil are rapidly falling

a prey to it, because what is a social evil appears to them to be a status symbol. There is no remedy but a vigorous social movement, a peaceful struggle against the evil. Likewise, the implementation of land reforms, homestead tenancy legislation, removal of corruption in the administration, etc. All this requires a mass awakening and a mass struggle. The youth, including the students must naturally be in the vanguard.

II

The question is even larger. It is how to bring about a systemic change in society; i e , how to bring about what I have called a total revolution : revolution in every sphere and aspect of society. The question becomes harder to answer when it is added that the total revolution has to be peacefully brought about without impairing the democratic structure of society and affecting the democratic way of life of the people. Put in this way. even the most legalistic and constitutionalist democrat would agree that all this could never be accomplished if the functioning of democracy were restricted to elections, legislation, planning and administrative execution. There must also be people's direct action. This action would almost certainly comprise, among other forms, civil disobedience, peaceful resistance, non-co-operation—in short, satyagraha in its widest sense. One of the unstated implications of such satyagraha would be self-change; that is to say, those wanting a change must also change themselves before launching any kind of action.

I recall Chandra Shekhar several times asking me what the Bihar movement, or any other such movement, would achieve if it were only to replace the Congress government of the Opposition. Will that government by any better ? It was a valid question, which the Opposition parties should ponder. Their performance in 1967 was certainly a great disappintment.

My answer to Chandra Shekhar used to be that the movement's aim was not only to change the government in Bihar, but much more which I had 'capsuled' (if I may coin this word) in the term 'revolution'. The movement would go on, which in itself would be a powerful guarantee of the Opposition government always being on its toes, and that it would go on faster and smoother because the new government would give its full co-operation. In

fact, a point to stress here is—and this I have done so often in the course of the Bihar movement—that had the Bihar government at the outset decided to co-operate with the students in examining and attempting seriously to solve the problems they had highlighted in their twelve demands, there would have been no question of the Bihar students' movement wanting to remove the Bihar Government. As is well known by now, the demand for the removal of the ministry and the Assembly came much later as a result of the violence, repression and lies let loose by the then Bihar Government.

The upshot of what I have been saying is that the people's movement of the type I am visualizing here can proceed either in co-operation or in confrontation with the government concerned. I enunciated this principle clearly for the first time in my speech at the civic reception at Poona (on 23 January 1975). But this was not a thought that had suddenly dawned upon me at the reception. It had always been present in my mind and I am sure I had spoken several times before about it. But because of the fact that the Poona Municipal Corporation, though in the hands of the Opposition with a socialist Mayor, had ruling Congress members too within its fold and they too had voted for my reception, I thought it necessary to enunciate that principle as clearly as possible. For the Poona press it was something new and they highlighted it and it was very well reported in the national press. That is why it was thought at that time that I had made a new departure. Indeed, it appeared like that to some Opposition leaders in Bihar too. But, the very procedure laid down for the starting of a movement implicity accepted this position. First, a number of demands that are most important for the people are drawn up and they are presented to the Chief Minister. If upon that the Chief Minister were to say, 'Well, all right let us sit together and work this out; I am prepared to co-operate with you in solving these problems and removing these evils'—corruption in the ministry, for instance—the struggle (for it still remains a struggle—a struggle not against the government but against certain evils and for certain changes and objectives) takes the course of co-operation. So far, not a single Congress Government has chosen to follow this course. More often, there is no reply at all or if there is, it is evasive and beside the point.

III

Thus, my concept of struggle need not inevitably include a struggle against the government of the State. It is up to the government concerned to decide what policy it will follow : that of co-operation or of confrontation. The question is, why have the Congress government, wherever faced with a people's charter of demands, never found it possible to adopt the path of co-operation ? The answer, as I indicated in my letter to the P.M., lies in the corruption among Congress ministers. Mrs Gandhi's own conduct in collecting crores of rupees from rich businessmen for party and election management is a piece of political corruption that has completely destroyed the moral susceptibilities of most power-seeking Congressmen. Party and election funds were collected in Jawaharlal's time also, in Shri Babu's time also (to speak only of Bihar, but it was done everywhere), but the scale of operations was comparatively small and most of the money was accounted for. In any case, it never happened that only Jawaharlal knew how much was collected; others also like Sardar Patel or S.K. Patil knew it. Nor were business bargains struck in the process so shamelessly corrupt as those of which one has heard in Mrs Gandhi's time.

Be that as it may, corruption being the focal point of the recent students' and people's movements, and the Congress ministries in the states or at the centre not being prepared to face the issue, they could not but adopt the consistently hostile attitude they have adopted to the movement. They was also perhaps a stronger reason, though it was not visible. When the Congress found that the movement was not going to be satisfied with superficial remedies but that it was also aiming to bring about basic fundamental changes in society, including basic political changes—in short, a total revolution—it was too much for it to stomach Opposition from the Government was natural, through raising a cloud of dust about 'danger to democracy'; danger of 'internal disturbance', etc.

The question is, will the Opposition parties behave differently ? That is yet to be seen. But having once joined the movement, no doubt to exploit it for party and election purposes (which is in the very nature of political parties), they find themselves not only committed to the final goal of total revolution but also being radicalized in the process of the struggle. Even about exploiting

the movement for party ends, I cannot deny that they have tried to do so in Bihar—the better organized and disciplined the party, the more guilty it has been. But in the total picture, it will not be wrong to say that the interests of the struggle have been generally placed above the interests of the party. The only exceptions are places where only one party holds sway and the non-party forces among students, citizens and the local Sarvodaya workers are weak; the party in question has in that case identified its party interests with the interests of the struggle. It was precisely with a view to strengthening the non-party forces that I had been busy organizing a new volunteer force of non-party youths and students called *Chhatra Yuva Sangharsha Vahini.* A big rally of these youths was to be held and addressed by me at Patna on the day of my arrest, 26 June, 1975.

There is one difficulty about this concept of peaceful social or total revolution. Can the necessary psychological climate of struggle be created at will ? If not, the struggle of this concept is as unlikely to get off the ground as Vinobaji's movement for *gram swarajya* True, the pre-conditions for a social struggle (using the term social in its widest sense) are always present in poverty, unemployment, mis-eduction, etc. But still there is need for a spark to kindle the fires of struggle, to set alight the dry tinder-box of Indian society.

There is another minor difficulty too. That is about the non-Congress and non-C.P.I. Opposition parties. Unless a struggle involves struggle against the Congress Government they will not feel attracted towards it, because in the case it hardly promises any dividends Indeed, they might fear that if the struggle is against the vested interests (as it must be to have any meaning), their participation in it might adversely affect their electoral chances. This may not be true of some of the left parties, however.

Is there an answer to these difficulties ? Yes, if we start writing on a clean slate. The future struggle must be related to the past struggle and the thread picked up where it had been dropped when the arrests were made and the Emergency was clamped down. The longer the fighters are kept in prison, the better would it be for resumption of the struggle. It is difficult at this stage to guess when, if at all, the general elections to the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabhas will be held. 'If at all' in the preceding sentence is

perhaps a wrong presumption, In her statements and interviews in the last two months Mrs Gandhi has repeatedly committed herself to holding elections. When is the question. From her point of view the right time will be when the Opposition is sufficiently demoralized and the people won over by her 20-point programme and sugared words and announcements of dazzling policies—which like fireworks will dazzle for a moment, then leave everything behind just as it was before. Whenever that moment comes for Mrs Gandhi, the election dates will be announced and the *detenus* released. With all the Opposition leaders and other *detenus* remaining in jail, the election would be an utter farce. It would be difficult for Mrs Gandhi to persuade public opinion in India and abroad particularly in the west, that elections under such conditions could ever be an exercise in democracy. Not even the British dared to do that in India.

Now, whatever happens in other states, the Congress has no chance in Bihar in a free and fair election. Then, with a pro-struggle government established, the struggle would be resumed again. (By the way, this could be done in Gujarat today, but there seems to be no one there to relate the *Navanirman* movement to the present most favourable political situation in that state.) However, it may be Bihar's opportunity and good fortune to show) how a society could be changed with the active co-operation between the people and the government.

Here I must comment on the usual talk of 'co-operation of the people', 'participation of the people', etc. Mrs Gandhi is also indulging a great deal in such talk and Mr [D.K.] Borooah—yes, the inevitable Mr Borooah—is busy setting up committees of the people to do this. In the heyday of Community Development this was common claptrap. But we who were working at the ground level then—in the villages—discovered what all that meant. It did not mean any initiative on the part of the people; it only meant that better-off people in the villages drained off everything or almost everything that the development pipeline was bringing to the people.

The case I am visualizing for Bihar would be different. The struggle committees, the *Janata Sarkars* would pick up the thread where it was broken and beginning with the items of the movement's programme as it stood at that moment, they would forge ahead towards the goal of total revolution, the state government

helping where its help was needed and taking help where it needed help itself. It is an exciting picture and I do pray to God to be spared to play such part as I may in this historic process.

What about other states? Well, I think Bihar's example would provide the stimulus and the movement—struggle and reconstruction, confrontation and co-operation—would spread.

IV

What I described yesterday [in Section III] may be only one way a movement for total change might spread to other states. But, there is another and more probable way perhaps. At the Gujarat and Bihar movements showed, it might grow out of a comparatively minor agitation and then spread like wildfire. In Gujarat, it began with agitation against a students' hostel warden and rapidly grew, forcing Mrs Gandhi and the central government to compel the Gujarat ministry to resign and finally dissolve the Assembly. Unfortunately, there was no one in Gujarat who could have carried forward the movement until at least its other aims had been achieved; removal of corruption, educational reform, solution of the problem of unemployment. For the students of Gujarat, it was a dazzling victory and no one can blame them for being dazzled by their success. That success and Morarjibhai's fast led to elections being held and the victory of the Janata Front. This too was a great outcome of that struggle. But, like Chandra Shekhar, historians in the future might ask: 'What was it all for? If that was all, why could they not wait until the next election?' This is one of Mrs Gandhi's favourite propaganda themes.

Well, this question and this line of propaganda would have been quite valid had the Gujarat movement ended merely in replacing the Congress with the Janata Front in power. Superficially, it appears like this. But on deeper understanding the conclusion becomes inescapable that the Gujarat movement was a path-finder in India's march towards democracy, withal parliamentary democracy, in which the *demos*, the people, are not mere passive agents but are active, demanding and in the end commanding. The Gujarat movement established for the first time in India the primacy of the people, going over the heads of organized parties and asserting their will. True, it was the students and the youths who seemed to be manning the battle front, but without the

support of the people behind them they could not have won. And the reason why the people backed the students was that the latter articulated the people's own grievances, desires and aims (no matter how veguely formulated). India and Indian democracy will never be the same after the Gujarat movement. Having said all this, I must again repeat that it was a pity : (a) the Gujarat movement ended with the dissolution of the Assembly, and (b) no one is trying to utilize a friendly and responsive government to re-start a revolutionary movement—call it a *Navaniraman* movement or whatever—that could present an example of how there could be co-operation in place of confrontation in brining about a total revolution in society.

I seem to have digressed from the main point I set out to make at the beginning. It is simply this, that no one can tell after Gujarat and Bihar what little spark anywhere may lead to a revolutionary momement in a state or in any area. The preconditions being present everywhere as in the two examples, it can begin and spread anywhere in the country. This is another, and a quite unpredictable, manner in which a Bihar-type movement may develop in other parts of India.

V

I remember Vinobaji saying to me, when he briefly broke his silence, that he agreed with my concept of struggle and was prepared to help me there, but that I should give up the idea of a struggle against the government. His objection to the latter struggle was that there was danger of war—in view of Pakistan's attitude, American supply of arms once again to Pakistan (the embargo having been lifted), and China's going out of the way to show its friendship for Pakistan. The struggle against the government might weaken the country. Vinobaji did not apprehend that the struggle might end in the strangulation of Indian democracy.

The struggle, the movement, was for total revolution, i.e., revolution in every sphere of social life and organization. The revolution being peaceful, it was not to happen suddenly and swiftly. It would take time, but the times being revolutionary, not too much time—perhaps a space of a decade or two. The basic systemic changes would happen first and the individual and group adaptations, mostly psychological, later.

This should make it clear that a revolutionary change of the political system was an integral and inescapable part of the total revolution and therefore of the struggle.

Perhaps Vinobaji held and still holds that systemic change in the political order could be brought about without a struggle, even a peaceful struggle. My experience of years of *Gram Swarajya* (village self-government) work has convinced me that *Gram Swarajya* is a valuable political organization in itself, provided it works and is not only on paper. But, the *Gram Swarajya* movement was not capable of bringing about a systemic political revolution. Theoretically, there is no reason why it should not. I do not know at how many hundreds maybe thousands, of meetings I had shown how, based on *Gram Swarajya*, the new polity would rise and displace the present one. I am not aware that any of my Sarvodaya colleagues, including those who are my severe critics now, ever found fault with my presentation. Districts were taken up, then C.D. [Community Development] blocks (as in the Saharsa district of Bihar) to build the model, but nowhere has success been achieved.

If we look at the task of total revolution from the narrow and doctrinaire (though never admitted as such) Sarvodaya point of view, it will be seen that the *Gram Jana-Sangharsha Samitis* (Village Committees for People's Struggle) in Bihar were performing the same function as the *Gram Swarajya* and many of them were active and were not only on paper. As the struggle deepened, more and more of the *Samitis* would have become active and developed into real *Janata Sarkars* (People's Governments at the village level). The *Gram Swarajya* movement, beginning with Bhoodan (land-gift) and passing through *Gramdan* (these were intended to be a sort of groundwork for the *Gram Swarajya* to come), has taken more than twenty years to reach the ineffectual state in which it is found today.

On the other hand, the *Gram Jana-Sangharsha Samitis* had hardly a few months in which to come to life and yet in many places they were much more real than *Gram Swarajya*. The reason I believe is the atmosphere of struggle. It seems to me that in such an atmosphere psychological forces are created that attract men and drive them to accept challenges and to change themselves and change others. In the placid atmosphere in which *Gram Swarajya* was working, such psychological forces remained dormant.

Spiritual and moral appeals, the saintly influence of Vinobaji, did bring about some remarkable moral changes in some individuals. But they never became a social or psychological force. During the Bhoodan movement when hundreds of thousands of landlords donated their land, it might be claimed that a really widespread moral force, not confined to only a few, was created. Perhaps it was so. But, it was short-lived and later uncounted donors took back, or tried to take back, what they had given. That moral force was soon dissipated—though Vinobaji was still in the field—and when *Gramdan* came along there was little of that force remaining. Some of the ideas about land and property remained, but not as accepted ideas. Had the latter been the case, those ideas could have become a tremendous force for social change.

It should not be deduced from the above that the atmosphere of struggle can be conjured up at will. It is only when the people generally, including the young and the students and the intelligentsia—and this latter is very important—are in a state of disaffection, frustration, disillusionment and are alienated from authority (beginning with the government down to the college authority and local authority), that the conditions for a struggle are ripe. The struggle may break out in violence, or it may take a peaceful form. It need hardly be pointed out that a peaceful people's struggle for revolutionary change would be more acceptable in Gandhi's India than elsewhere, and would not appear in the eyes of the revolutionary activists as a chimera. In either case, leadership and organization would be necessary to bring out of the revolutionary movement. In the absence of leadership and organization, the revolutionary situation might end in chaos or imposition of a dictatorship.

VI

The question of the Bihar movement and other similar movements getting involved with Opposition political parties has worried a number of friendly intellectuals and many well-wishers. I have been no less worried myself about it. As I look back I ask myself, did I make a mistake, and if so, what was it ? I have asked myself this question again and again during the movement also. What were, and are, the answers ? There is no doubt that if the movement had not got mixed up with Opposition parties, its

character, its experimental utility, its educative value, its ability to enable the people to see their problems with their own eyes (not the eyes of the parties) and to think of their responsibility to do whatever lay in their power to solve their problems, to change themselves and change their material and social environment, and if they must offer peaceful resistance or non-co-operation in this process, to do so singly, in groups or in 'mass' (i e., through a mass movement) would not have been compromised.

But the ideal never gets translated into practice without suffering deterioration. The first difficulty was, and will be again whenever the attempt is made anew, that it is just not possible to keep political parties from coming into an open mass movement. True, if the movement had been confined to the Sarvodaya workers alone and its principle was to keep away all political parties (including the ruling party), it would have been possible to keep them away. But, then, there would have been no people's movement.

Another aspect of this difficulty is that I did not start the movement. I had to take over what was on and give it direction, spread and depth. I am afraid, elsewhere and at other times other men wanting to build a people's movement will be faced with similar situations. Moreover, at its start, while the Bihar students' movement was truly a non-party affair and 80 to 90 per cent of the young men and women who participated in its programmes had no political party attachments, its leadership was surely made up of student and ex-student personnel who had strong party affiliations and who undoubtedly were guided by the party leaders outside. The parties involved were mainly four—Jana Sangh, Socialist Party, B.L.D. and Congress (O). At several university centres the Jana Sangh was the strongest element, in some the B.L.D. and the S.P. The Congress (O) leadership in the Steering Committee was quite mature and influential, though numerically weak.

Now this was the situation when my association with the Bihar students' movement started. The political parties were there already. In fact, it will be admitted by all objective observers that my influence kept the party influence low, helped to evolve a consensus, and give the movement—at the start the students' movement and then the people's movement—a non-party political character.

There is yet another, and theoretically the most important, aspect of this problem of parties and a non-party people's movement. It is well known that both the Gujarat and Bihar movements

started with certain demands or charges laid at the door of the state government : corruption (specially in government), unemployment, educational reform (or revolution) plus minor complaints about examinations. admissions, hostels, etc. Now, as I have said earlier in these Notes, it was up to the state government to have met the students in a friendly manner and discussed the demands seriously and done something about them. But when in either state the government chose the path of confrontation, a struggle against the government became inevitable. The situation immediately attracted the Opposition parties as honey attracts flies. What does one do in a situation like this ? The conclusion from this is that an attempt should be made to avoid a confrontation with the government, as Vinobaji wanted me to do. (His reasons, of course, were different, as I have explained earlier in these pages). The question is, can you do it ? No one, at least no one who has no party affiliation and therefore no motivation to exploit every situation for partisan ends, and who still is anxious to start a peaceful revolutionary movement, i.e., a movement to bring about basic changes in society and in social attitudes, can ever, in the conditions of our country, avoid a confrontation with the kind of government we have. But, if the miracle happens and the government and the ruling party come forward to co-operate with the revolutionary movement, that would be something to celebrate, not to mourn. But I do not see the Congress under Mrs Gandhi ever behaving thus. What about the Opposition parties ? Will they behave any better ? That is to be seen. I personally think they will, at least, in Bihar and hopefully in other states too, provided there were in those states popular movements of change.

This brings me to the last part of this question.

Is the involvement of the political parties in a Bihar-type people's movement an unmixed evil ? Its faults are obvious enough, as touched upon briefly in the foregoing and as articulated by every friendly and understanding critic. But in the first place, in an open movement involving the greater bulk of college students and the people, it is impossible to keep anyone out as I have shown above. After all, the parties that entered the movement in Bihar did not enter as parties, and their leaders, workers and sympathisers came in as individuals. These parties, of course, at their formal meetings outside the movement passed resolutions and issued statements fully supporting the movement. But, the question

to ask is, is the participation of Opposition parties an unmixed evil ? My unhesitating answer is No. Its first result, too obvious be argued, is that it lends strength to the movement. But, the more important thing is that the parties undergo a sea-change in the process. True, this would not happen in a state where there is no strong non-party leadership in the movement. But in Bihar it has happened. All the parties involved are committed to the aims of total revolution and to the dynamics of change : struggle. This is no small gain. And I would invite the consideration of my intellectual friends to this great possibility. So far, we have seen students' and people's struggle in the form of confrontation with the government. In Bihar, after the next elections there is every possibility of witnessing a people's struggle in co-operation with the state government. I hope the baptism of fire through which the Opposition has passed and is passing in Bihar would have steeled their commitment to total revolution. I admit, if God removes me from the scene before then, this will only remain a dream. But, the experience will not have been lost and later someone else will come forward to pick up the thread.

VII

I should add one thought to what I have written above. There is no possibility in sight and in the near future of India having any other type of democracy than she has today. Hopefully, if the Opposition wins the next parliamentary elections, the present constitution and the electoral laws, rules, etc. might be improved. But the 'type' of democracy will not change much. Therefore, there seems to be no way for a people's movement (which term should include the students and youth) to carry forward its programmes of revolution except in the context of a party (or a coalition of parties) government. The context may be malignant or benign as discussed above.

In respect of 'improvement' in the present type of democracy, I have mentioned constitutional and statutory amendments under an Opposition government. But there may be extra-constitutional and legal ways of doing it also. This can be possible only in the context of an on-going people's movement. These Struggle Committees or People's Committees, or *Navanirman Samitis*, *Viplavi Samitis* (whatever be the name given to the organs of people's

struggles) may perform, as we were aiming to do, and we shall again try to do so, the functions of (a) being sounding boards or consultation media at the time of candidate selection, and (b) acting as 'watch-dogs' and accountability-enforcers over their local representatives as well as over the whole working of the government.

18

ENDS AND MEANS

Jayaprakash Narayan

We have long debated the question : within or without the Congress ? There have been weighty arguments on both sides, but the weight has lately been shifting to one side alone. Some weeks ago I had published an article examining the pros and cons of this question, and indicating the inclination of my own mind.

Since that article was written, developments have further clarified that issues involved. The A.I.C.C. to its last sitting [1948] adopted certain fundamental principles of a new constitution of the Congress. These principles make it clear that the Congress is no longer to remain a national front—not even at the time of a national crisis. The Congress is to become now a party and the Indian National Congress which stood for the whole nation and fought for its freedom and received the allegiance of all sections of the people is no more, or lives only in name. Logically the name too should have gone, so that the great traditions associated with that name should have been kept unsullied by party politics.

In these circumstances the Party must leave the Congress. That is the clear demand of the needs of Indian socialism.

There is another set of very weighty considerations which point to the same conclusion. In the article referred to, a passing reference was made to the need for an opposition party. That need has grown in the weeks that have elapsed since.

The presence of Gandhiji in our midst was a powerful guarantee of civil liberties and people's freedoms. In his absence the

dangers of authoritarianism and totalitarianism have grown. These dangers would be accentuated further if there were no opposition party in the country—a party whose patriotism and faith in democracy were out of the question.

Those in Government are individually good men and undoubtedly wish to serve their country, but while a few among them are ardent democrats, others have shown scant regard for the liberties of the people. The old administrative machine, which was tuned to British authoritarianism and taught to disregard the popular will and the popular good, is still functioning much as before. In fact, wags like to sum up the present situation in the quip : The British have gone, the I.C S. have come.

In the days of the British, the Congress was the conscience of the people and their tribune. Now, the Congress is so identified with the Government that it has lost the power to protect the rights of the people. As a matter of fact, its main task today is to defend the Government and justify of the people its every act—right or wrong

The result of all this is a frightful situation. Criticism, even fruitful criticism, is resented and sought to be suppressed. There have been instances in which publishers have been hauled up before authority and ticked off for giving publicity to offending, though truthful, news or views. Means of propaganda that are in the hands of the State, such as the A.I.R., have been used for party ends by the party in power. Administrative authority is exercised illegitimately to curb the activities of political workers who become thorns in the side of supporters of the Government. There are examples of trade union workers being put into prison on the recommendation of I N.T.U.C. bosses. Liberal use is being made of Sections 144 and 107 of the Criminal Procedure Code to put down political rivals. The Public Safety Acts are being misused to the same ends. There have been cases of persons showing sympathy for the Socialist Party and contributing to its funds being threatened with dire consequences. Members of the services are being reduced to the position of lackeys of the party in power. While the services except those in commercial, industrial or other similar public undertakings should be kept out of politics, in the sense that their members should not take active part in party politics, they should have full freedom to belong to the party of their choice—provided the party is an open political party

functioning within the law—and to subscribe to it, and case their votes for it at elections. This right is being denied today, and there are ridiculous instances in which even school teachers have been asked to keep out of politics ! As we advance towards socialism ever-widening sectors of citizens would be brought within the sphere of Government employment, and if all of these were to be denied opportunities to participate in politics, we would end up in a dreadful totalitarian system in which no other party than the party in power had any chance to exist. In view of all these very serious considerations, the need for an opposition party becomes imperative. One-party rule or at any rate the absence of a popular opposition party, which itself believes in democracy and is loyal to the country and the State, is sure to encourage the growth of totalitarianism, particularly in view of the fact that the present disturbed conditions have vested the Executive with very large powers.

In the conditions existing in the country today, the Socialist Party alone can fulfil the need for a popular opposition party. This is not said in boasting, but as an objective statement of fact.

Thus, taking into consideration all aspects of the question, the conclusion we reach is that we must leave the Congress now and function as an independent political party. I have no doubt that this conclusion will commend itself to you all.

The decision to separate from the Congress places on us heavy responsibilities. I should like here in all humility to lay down certain principles which should guide us in our new career.

First of all, our decision to break away from the Congress will cause serious anxiety to many friends, who may have no interest in party politics but are deeply concerned over the future of the nation. I refer to those friends particularly who believe that at a moment of national crisis it was not parting of ways that was necessary but joining of hands.

We must set the minds of these friends at rest and allay their anxiety. We have not been familiar in this country with parliamentary government, and necessarily, with the nature of democratic opposition. The sense in which we are prone to understand an opposition is the sense in which the Congress was an opposition to the British Government The Congress used the method of direct action to destroy the British Government in India root and branch. That cannot be the nature of an opposition

in a democracy. In a democracy the party in power and the party in opposition (assuming it is a democratic party itself) are both united in their loyalty to the State and pursuit of democratic methods; in times of national crisis both parties bury the hatchet and while keeping their identities and organizations apart, join hands to serve the nation together. In a democracy an opposition party is not an anti-national party; rather it is always a party that advocates a different, and according to it, a better way of serving the nation than the party in power. During the British period, to be anti-Congress was to be anti-national, because the Congress stood for the nation as against the foreigner. Now in a free India we must accustom the people to the idea that to be opposed to the Congress is not to be opposed to the nation, but rather to be opposed to certain policies and methods of government and to advocate alternative policies. Further, to be opposed to the Congress means to attempt by democratic methods to replace it as the party in power.

That the country is passing through a great internal crisis and there are external dangers of incalculable gravity no one can deny, At such a time all parties in the State, sharing common objectives and common ideals, should come together and co-operate in facing the crisis. There is much in common between the Congress and the Socialist Party : their faith in secular democracy brings them nearer together than any other two parties in the country. This naturally means that the Socialist Party shall ever be ready to fight for the defence of the State and of democracy, and against the forces of communalism and reaction; and, in this fight, it would be happy always to join hands with the Congress.

It would be our job to reassure the country of all this by deeds rather than words.

Finally, I am conscious that when we leave the Congress we shall leave behind many friends and valued comrades with whom our bonds of personal and ideological attachment will never snap. Even when working outside, it shall be our endeavour to strengthen their hands; and I hope that by functioning as an opposition we shall make their task lighter and their path easier.

I seek your indulgence now to bear with me in examining a problem that has deeply worried me of late. The problem is that of methods or means It is important for us, both in the light of our impending decision to break away from the Congress, and of

the tragic events that have recently taken place.

In the West, opposition parties do not consider it wrong to use lies and falsehood to bring the rival party into disrepute; they do not consider it wrong to practise bribery and corruption to achieve favourable results at elections. There are certain parties, which go much beyond lies and corruption. For them even murder, loot and arson are a part of political strategy. We have witnessed this strategy unfold its bottomless tragedies in the past months.

From time immemorial there have been politicians who have preached that there is no such thing as ethics in politics. In the old times however, this amoralism did not spread its corrupting influence beyond a small class that played at politics, and the mass of the people were left uncorrupted by what the leaders and ministers of State did. But since the rise of totalitarianism, which includes both Fascism-Nazism and Stalinism, this principle has been applied on a mass scale and every individual in society has been affected by it. This has resulted in such an eclipse of moral values from social life that not only its political sector has been darkened but every sector of human life, including even family life.

Since the victory of Stalinist methods in Russia, it has been commonly believed that there is no room for moral values in Marxism, and it is usual for a socialist who talks of such matters to be branded as a renegade or at the least, a deviationist. I should, therefore, like to state before you in the clearest possible terms that I for one have come to believe that for the achievement of socialism a strict regard for means is of the highest importance. Socialism means different things to different persons, but if by socialism we mean a form of society in which the material needs of every individual are satisfied and also in which the individual is a cultured and civilized being, is free and brave, kind and generous, then I am absolutely clear that we will never reach this goal except by strict adherence to certain human values and standards of conduct. It is too often believed that all would be well only if there were no exploitation in society and everyone was well fed and clothed and housed. But, a society of well-fed and clothed and housed brutes is a far cry from socialism.

There were many things that Mahatma Gandhi taught us. But, the greatest thing he taught us was that means are ends, that evil

means can never lead to good ends that fair ends require fair means. Some of us may have been sceptical of this truth, but recent world events and events at home have convinced me that nothing but good means will enable us to reach the goal of a good society, which is socialism.

When, in a statement the other day, I talked of the need of spiritual regeneration, some of you might have thought perhaps that I had been so deeply shaken by recent happenings[1] that I was trying to escape from the hard realities of life. Those of you who might have thought so are completely mistaken. I have no knowledge of matters spiritual, if the term is understood in a religious or metaphysical sense. I have not suddenly come to acquire faith in something called the spirit or the soul or Brahma. Such philosophy as I have is earthy and human. I am concerned merely with the problem of the type of men I should like to live with in society. Clearly, I do not like to live in a society of liars and murderers, of men who have no kindness in them, no tolerance, no fellow-feeling.

No one can say what human nature is; but this much can be said that it is what you make of it. A good man is not born. He becomes good by training. Therefore, if the aim of our Party is not only to produce well-fed, well clothed well-housed animals, but also to produce good men, then I say that all our political work must be inspired by certain ethical values. I hope that you will give this viewpoint the consideration it deserves.

I crave your indulgence again to permit me to examine another problem from a somewhat unorthodox point of view. There is a view held by some that all politics pre power politics. I consider this to be a disastrous point of view. I shall examine here two important aspects of this way of thinking. First, let us see how it affects Party organization. Those who hold this view should logically make every attempt—I do not say that they are actually doing so—to secure power within the Party itself. And power, according to this view, being the quintessence of politics, the use of every kind of means may be considered justified to secure it, including means such as lying, scandal-mongering and cheating at Party elections. Clearly—and I hope all of us would agree—such means could only result in the complete disintegration of the Party. I, therefore, hope and pray that every one of us will reject all such means and eschew all quest for power within the

Party. It is human to yearn for recognition and aspire to positions of influence and leadership. But one should be content to reach these positions by virtue of one's work and service done to the cause.

The second aspect of this view which I wish to examine here has a far deeper and wider significance. They theory that all politics are power politics has the necessary underlying basis—that the State is the only instrument of social good. In other words, those who subscribe to this theory believe—unless they are mere self-seekers, in which case unworthy of notice—that they must capture the State in order to be able to serve society and bring about the social transformation they desire.

I reject this view completely. The Congress today has captured the State, but every thinking Congressman will agree that the Congress would completely undermine itself if it depended on the State for every effort at social change and development. In fact the view is growing among the constructive workers in the Congress that they must cut themselves off from the parliamentary machine and function independently so as to serve both society and the State.

The experience of totalitarian countries, whether fascist or communist, has shown that is the State is looked upon as the sole agent of social reconstruction, we get nothing but a regimented society in which the State is all-powerful, and popular initiative is extinct and the individual is made a cog in a vast unhuman machine. Such a society is surely not the objective of our Party; nor could a society of this nature ever be an intermediate state in the evolution of the democratic socialist society that is our aim.

Democracy requires that the people should depend as little as possible on the State. And, both according to Mahatma Gandhi and Karl Marx, the highest stage of democracy is that in which the State has withered away. Totalitarianism, as distinct from a transitional 'dictatorship' of millions of toilers over a small defeated class of vested interests, can hardly be a half-way house to full democracy. It is necessary for the growth of full democracy that people's voluntary effort have the freest possible chance and that the people, through varied kinds of economic and cultural organizations and institutions, be enabled and encouraged to improve their condition and manage their affairs.

Accordingly, the type of mind that I should like to see develop within the Party is one that would make every one of us indifferent as to whether one is Prime Minister of the Republic or a trade union or other field-worker. I believe that whether or not we have the government in our hands, if we succeed by constructive work in creating a sound trade union movement capable of running industry; in educating the working class in the arts of citizenship; in creating co-operative communities in the villages; in mobilizing the youth and children as voluntry servants of the nation; in creating cultural influences that go down even to the most backward sections of the people; if we succeed in eradicating caste, supersition and bigotry; if we succeed in enlisting the co-operation of hundreds of thousands of selfless workers to whom the seats of power offer no attraction—if we succeed in all this, we shall also succeed in building up a socialist society. In this event, the State will inevitably become a socialist State and will play its inevitable and appointed role, which would go little beyond imposing the imprimatur of the law on what has already been accomplished or on what cannot be prevented from happening. The State in this manner will only be an instrument in the hands of a popular socialist movement—i.e , of the people organized independently of the State for a socialist way of living—rather than the source and fountain-head of all authority and will.

These observations are of particular significance in the context of the historic decision we are about to take. The temptation for members of an opposition party to look always to the seats of power is great. We must keep this temptation in check. We must remember today, and never forget in the coming years, that it would be by constructive work rather than by the tactics of a parliamentary opposition, by positive service rather than by exploiting the mistakes and faults of others, that we would succeed in establishing a democratic socialist society.

I might refer here briefly to an important corollary to what I have said above. In a revolutionary party, i.e., a party that aims at fundamental social change, there are always a parliamentary wing and a wing made up of field workers. A time inevitably comes when a conflict arises between these wings as to which should dominate the other. Such a conflict has already arisen withih the Congress, which at least has had a revolutionary past; and the victory has already gone to the parliamentary wing. In this event,

the field or constructive workers of the Congress would separate and from themselves into an independent body of social servants. We, on the other hand, should so develop our Party that constructive and parliamentary work are integrated together and the constructive workers have the dominant voice. Only then could the Party become a fit instrument of full democracy.

Before I close I feel I should say something about the problem of left unity. Since the re-organization of the Party, the problem has often come up for discussion at Party meetings and in the Policy Statement there is a clear declaration about our relations with the Communist Party. The question has been raised again, and members of the Party have wondered what our policy should be. I should like to deal with this question of left unity in two parts : (1) unity with the Communist Party, and (2) unity with the others.

As far as the Communist Party is concerned, our policy has been unambiguous. World events have underlined that policy. The fact that communist parties are subservient to Russia has received the endorsement of current history—the latest proof coming from Czechoslovakia. Those whose eyes even Czechoslovakia has not opened can be nothing else than conscious tools of the communists. Is unity possible with the fifth columnists of a foreign power ? We may be as friendly as we wish to the foreign power itself; but surely we would be mortgaging the freedom of our country if we let foreign agents grow in prestige and influence.

Recent developments have also shown up the character of communist 'democracy'. In the Policy Statement we have said that not only do we differ from the communists on the question of loyalties but also on that of objectives : whereas we aim at democratic socialism the communists believe in totalitarianism. To that the communists reply that they have their own form of democracy. What that form is in reality has once again been demonstrated in Czechoslovakia Communist democracy is so perfect that democrats like Jan Masaryk cannot survive its foulness and Benes,[2] the head of the State, cannot be allowed to be at large.

The third basic difference between the socialist and communist parties, to which the Statement of Policy refers, is the difference regarding methods. Reverting to Czechoslovakia again, communist methods are in full bloom there for all those but the blind to see. In our own country those methods are once again being

unfolded. A lying propaganda has been let loose against our Party by the communist press and its various fronts. I have had a personal taste of this propaganda as President of the Railwaymen's Federation. Till the time the communists subscribed to the slogan, 'Nehru Sarkar Zindabad', every settlement with the Railway Board was welcomed as a great victory. Now, when their line has been reversd and they are out to strike at the very roots of the Indian State, settlements no less generous are being described as sell-outs and I am personally being attacked as having been bought out by the Railway Board. That is the kind of method this Party follows, while raising simultaneously the slogan of left unity. Their can be nothing in common between our and communist methods.

The conclusion, therefore, at which I arrive is that unity with the Communist Party must be resolutely ruled out if the Socialist Party seriously believes in freedom and democratic socialism.

In this connection, I must warn you all that, as elsewhere in the world, the communists are going to take advantage of the democratic character of our Party to infiltrate into it, to plant their stooges within it and try to split it and finally destroy it. If you are not vigilant, if you are taken in by their special pleading, if even for a moment you come to believe in their bonafides, you open the door to the ruin of the Party. Every one of you must be on guard and must make the people aware of the communist menace. There are signs that suggest as Eastern Cominform. This makes the communist menace more menacing.

After the 15th of August 1947, the tasks of our Party are constructive. We have to build up a new India. The communists, on the other hand, are not interested in building up anything at all. Their interest is in creating disturbances and troubles so as to exploit them to popularize their Party, and to weaken the Indian State. A strong India becoming the focus of a third force will not suit the communists and they will do everything in thier power to prevent the regeneration of their country. So much for the communists.

As far as other leftist groups are concerned, it would be necessary to go into the programme and policy of each group and only then can the question of unity be settled. Just because a group is dubbed leftist, it need not follow that we must work with it. There are several leftist groups in the country whose difference from the Communist Party is as slight as that between Tweedledum and

Tweedledee. These groups accept in toto the objective of totalitarianism and the amoralism of communist methods. Their only quarrel with the communists is that they do not worship Stalin, but they have other gods to worship and their attitude towards Russia is only a little removed from subservience. Further, the appreciation that some of these leftist groups have of the situation in India is fundamentally different from ours. For instance, there are groups which say that the Nehru Government is a Kerensky Government which has to be overthrown by violence; and these groups endeavour towards that end. In these circumstances how is unity with these groups possible?

I have always held, and nothing has happened recently to compel me to change that view, that there is only one method by which left can consolidate its forces and acquire sufficient strength to challenge the right and play an effective part in national politics. A number of small leftist groups, each with its own denominational dogmas and petty rivalries, banded together in a loose consolidation can hardly give the type of united lead to the masses that would be necessary. Differences and jealousies would arise and would ever be a source of weakness. Any fundamental issue may threaten to disrupt it. The left, if it has to become a political force, must be organized within the fold of one single party, which should have strength enough to lead the people on the basis of a consistent programme of action. Without any sense of partiality, merely as a statement of objective fact, I state that today the Socialist Party is the only party in the country which can play this role. Now, when we are emerging as an independent party, I have no doubt the Socialist Party would welcome with open arms all such leftists as may agree to join forces.

Notes and References

1 These refer to the widespread communal killings in India just before and after partition and the assassination of Gandhi on 30 January, 1948.

2 Jan Masaryk, Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, was found dead in 1948 in the courtyard of his office, a fortnight after the Communists seized power in that country. The official verdict on the cause of his death was suicide, but this was doubted by many people Edward Benes, one of the makers of modern Czechoslovakia, was President of that country at the time the Communists seized power.

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AN OUTLINE PICTURE OF SWARAJ

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

The Congress and the country are on the eve of a great national upheaval. The final battle for freedom is soon to be fought. This will happen when the whole world is being shaken by mightly forces of change. Out of the catastrophe of the European War, thoughtful minds everywhere are anxious to create a new world—a world based on the co-operative goodwill of nations and men. At such a time the Congress considers in necessary to state definitely the ideals of freedom for which it stands and for which it is soon to invite the Indian people to undergo the uttermost suffering.

The free Indian nation shall work for peace between nations and total rejection of armaments and for the method of peaceful settlement of national disputes through some international authority freely established. It will endeavour particularly to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours, whether they be great powers or small nations, and shall covet no foreign territory.

The law of the land will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis of maintenance of order shall be the sanction and concurrence of the people.

The free Indian State shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom, provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly.

The State shall not discriminate in any manner between

citizens of the nation. Every citizen shall be guaranted equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privilege shall be abolished. There shall be no titles emanating either from inherited social status or the State.

The political and economic organiztion of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. While this organization shall conduce to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every memeber of society, material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual. To this end and to secure social justice, the State shall endeavour to promote small-scale production carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. All large-scale collective production shall be eventually brought under collective ownership and control, and in this behalf the State shall being by nationalizing heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralized.

The life of the villages shall be reorganized and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that land shall belong to the actual cultivator alone, and that no cultivator shall have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living. This will end the various systems of landlordism on the one hand and farm bondage on the other.

The State shall protect the interests of all the classes, but when any of these impinges upon the interests of those who have been poor and down-trodden, it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice.

In all State-owned and State-managed enterprises, the workers shall be represented in the management through their elected representatives and shall have an equal share in it with the representatives of the Government.

In the Indian States, there shall be complete democratic government established and in accordance with the principles of abolition of social distinctions and equality between citizens, there shall not be any titular heads of the States in the persons as Rajas and Nawabs.

This is the order which the Congress envisages and which it

shall work to establish. The Congress firmly believe that this order shall bring happiness, prosperity and freedom to the people of all races and religions in India who together shall build on these foundations a great and glorious nation.

20

THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT AND ITS OBJECTIVES

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Some people have accused me of trying to destroy democracy. And I can say that they have not bothered to listen to what I have been saying. What I want in this movement is not to dissolve the assembly and set up my government in Bihar. What I want is that those who represent the people in the legislatures should be under the control of the people, that they should not be their masters but their servants. The people at large have but one contact with democracy, their vote every five years.

Now we know that this instrument has been thoroughly corrupted by the party in power. The force behind the elections is not the will of the people, it is the force of lathis, money and caste. People are prevented from voting. Voting booths are captured by political *thugs*. Votes are bought and caste loyalties are fully exploited. And governments can be formed, as in U.P., with a mere fraction of the votes. Is this just ? Then after the elections what happens ? Do MLAs pay any attention to their constituencies ? Is there any respect for public opinion ? None at all.

I have tried in my writings and speeches to focus on this. But nothing has been done at all about corruption, election spending, defections and other maladies. I did not know what could be done till the upsurge in Gujarat. That taught me that the only way to put things right was for the people to act for themselves. They are

now awakened, they are beginning to act to give this formal democracy some flesh and blood.

DISSOLUTION OF BIHAR ASSEMBLY

This was not on the original agenda of the movement. It was only after the complete collapse of the administration on March 18 and the way the Government handled the Gaya firings in April that I realised that this Government was totally inept. It had no right to continue. The assembly by endorsing the Government's repressive measures became a symbol of dishonesty. It gave an apparent popular sanction to the Government which the people would never endorse. So it had to go.

FUTURE COURSE OF MOVEMENT

Dissolution is not the ultimate aim of the movement. It is barely a first step. In Gujarat, the assembly was dissolved but there has been no change. The Nav Nirman Samiti lies in pieces. I told them that if they wanted the movement to succeed they had to look beyond the dissolution to see that the old system did not creep in again. I do not want Bihar to make this mistake.

What we want to do is to set up students' and people's action samitis in all parts of the State, down to the panchayats and mohallas. To begin with, these samitis will mobilise public opinion in the constituencies—this is going on now—to get the MLAs to resign, to organise public meetings to show that the people have lost faith in the MLAs and demand their resignations.

Once the Assembly is dissolved these independent samitis will then mobilise public opinion in favour of honest candidates They may endorse the candidate of a party or if they see that none is suitable, they may set up their own candidate and work for his success. Then after they are elected these samitis will be watch-dog organisations, to make sure that the people's representatives do not misuse their position. If they indulge in corrupt practices they will again mobilise public opinion and get them to resign. They will be the people's organs of power.

When their organisation is complete, when the people have an effective voice, then they can take up other programmes like the uplift of Harijans or the Adivasis, like land distribution, like

putting an end to the practice of "benami" cultivation and the dowry system—in short, anything that goes against the interest of the people. I want society to be transformed politically, culturally and economically. That is why I refer to this as a movement for total revolution from which a completely new society will emerge.

I believe only in two kinds of militancy. There is the Gandhian non-violent militancy and there is the violent militency. Anything in between makes for chaos and can only lead to a dictatorship. It invites retaliation in kind and the government has far greater resources of that kind than anyone else. There is no political party today which can organise a violent revolution. Maybe, ten years from now there will be, but not today. So the only way is non-violent militancy.

On this I made up my mind a long time ago. I have been through all these phases. I started out by advocating violent revolution after my return from the US in 1929 and continued to be a revolutionary in that sense until I saw that independence was achieved by Gandhian way. I then told Gandhi that there was no room in independent India for violent change because we now had our own and not a colonial government.

I haven't changed since then. I don't believe that you can change man with violence, the change is only superficial. The only way to achieve permanent social change is through nonviolence. I have made up my mind on the basis of my experience and I do not argue with anyone who comes to me and says that violence is the only way. I say that I have decided for myself, but if you want, you go your way. Nobody can accuse me of encouraging violence. A lot of people have told me that had it not been for me the situation would have been difficult to control on June 5 in Patna when the Indira Brigade people tried to provoke us by shooting at the procession.

I am afraid my Sarvodaya friends may not like this but I have come to feel that our approach was wrong. We tried by persuasion and education to get people to establish primary units of democracy to achieve *gram swarajya* and *nagar swarajya.* We spent a lot of time on this. The real aim was not redistribution of land but to establish the idea of sharing : those who have more should share with those who have less. This was the idea behind bhoodan. The first step was successful and people talked about a *toofan* of gramdan. In block after block, people signed papers saying that

they would give up a share of their land. But when we went back to them to get the land they began to make a lot of excuses.

This was discussed at the Rajgir conference, and Saharsa district was taken up for intensive development to be a model for the whole country. A lot of effort went into this, but apart from five or six blocks, it was a failure. There were several other advantages, like the mixing of Harijans and high castes became accepted after we set up *gram sabhas*, but after this experience I felt that the *gram swarajya* approach was not the right one. The struggle approach is the right one. Gandhiji had seen this when he developed struggle along with constructive work.

I have asked students to give up one year of their education so that they can dedicate themselves to this movement. It is their movement, they started it and they must see it through. They have very little to lose if colleges are closed. In fact they will benefit. The education system does not teach them anything, it does not train them for any work. It does not help them to understand the world they live in.

Look at the number of unemployed engineers and graduates. Is this the sort of education system we want ? If the students go out into the countryside they will learn more in that one year than through all the courses they can read put together. The authorities can also spend this year usefully to study how the education system can be improved. I know there are students who want to appear for exams and others who are keen to get on with their studies and that there are age limits which may come in the way of their finding jobs. But they have to make the sacrifice. This is a movement which will benefit them also. And when a new government comes to power, safely it will give preference in employment to those students who took part in the movement.

I have never spoken of partyless democracy in the context of the movement. People misrepresent me when they say that I want a partyless democracy in Bihar This is an ideal. Even the Communists who criticise me forget that Marx spoke of the eventual dissolution of the state. Partyless democracy is something for the future It is possible that a new party may emerge from the movement, but that is not its aim. It seeks to give to the people the power over their interests that they have been deprived of.

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THE GANDHIAN ALTERNATIVE

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Gandhiji has never directly and comprehensively dealt with the nature of society under Swaraj; therefore, it cannot be said that he has any consistent alternative to socialism. However, he has made statements on various occasions and some of his economic views can be garnered from his writings. These, if not to Gandhiji himself, to his followers undoubtedly, appear as providing an adequate alternative to socialism. 'Gandhism is true Socialism for India', is a remark which one hears not infrequently. It is for this reason that I propose to examine those views of Gandhiji that are germane to may subject.

Before doing so, let me repeat the problem we have set before us. We are interested in permanently destroying the basis of economic exploitation and inequality. I have shown that the socialist solution is to abolish private ownership of means of production. Let us see how Gandhiji proposes to solve the problem.

One of the most explicit statements of Gandhiji's views on the issues raised by us is found in the interview that he gave to some zamindars of the U.P. at Kanpur last year. An authentic version of the interview was published by Sri Mahadev Desai.

In order to enable to reader to follow my criticisms, I give below the whole of the interview, except a short paragraph at the end which is not relevant to our discussion :

Question 1 : The Karachi Congress passed a resolution laying

down the fundamental rights of the people and since it recognized private property, nationalist zamindars have supported the Congress But, a new socialist party in the Congress threatens the extinction of private property. How would it affect the Congress policy ? Don't you think that this will precipitate class war ? Will you prevent it ?

Answer 1 : The Karachi resolution can be altered only by the open session of the next Congress; but let me assure you that I shall be no party to dispossessing the propertied classes of their private property without just cause My objective is to reach your hearts and convert you so that you may hold all your private property in trust for your tenants and use it primarily for their welfare. I am aware of the fact that within the ranks of the Congress, a new party called the Socialist Party is coming into being, and I cannot say what would happen if that party succeeds in carrying the Congress with it. But I am quite clear that if a strictly honest and unchallengeable referendum of our millions were to be taken, they would not vote for a wholesale expropriation of the propertied classes. I am working for the co-operation and co-ordination of capital and labour and of the landlord and tenant. It is open to you to join the Congress as much as it is open to the poorest by paying a fee of annas four and subscribing to the Congress creed. But I must utter a note of warning. I have always told the millowners that they are not exclusive owners of the mills and workmen are equal sharers in the ownership. In the same way I would tell you that the ownership of your land belongs as much to the ryots as to you; and you may not squander your gains in luxurious or extravagant living, but must use them for the well being of the ryots. Once you make your ryots experience a sense of kinship with you and a sense of security that their interests as members of a family will never suffer at your hands, you may be sure that there cannot be a clash between you and them and no class war. A class war is foreign to the essential genius of India which is capable of evolving communism broadbased on the fundamental rights of all on equal justice. The Ramarajya of my dream ensures the rights alike of the prince and the pauper.

You may be sure that I shall throw the whole weight of my

influence in preventing a class war. I do not know what I am going to do after the termination of my self-imposed restriction on August 3;' but I shall try my best to avoid going back to prison. But, it is difficult to predict anything with certainty in a situation of which I am unaware today. But supposing that there is an attempt unjustly to deprive you of your property you will find me fighting on your side.

Question 2 : We propose to support the Congress in the next Assembly elections. But we have our misgivings about the policy they will adopt in the Assembly. Could you persuade the Parliamentary Board to dispel our fears ?

Answer 2 : I invite you to discuss this thing with the members of the Parliamentary Board. I know, that no member will talk of expropriation or extinction of private property. They will certainly insist on a radical reform in your relations with the ryots, but that should be no new thing to you. Even Sir Malcolm Hailey and Lord Irwin appealed to you to realize and live up to the spirit of the times. If you will only do this, you may be sure that we shall be able to evolve an indigenous socialism of the purest type. The socialism and the communism of the west are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One of such conceptions is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it for I know that the essential difference between man and brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owes in common with the brute and, therefore, is superior to the selfishness and violence which belong to the brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man. That is the fundamental conception of Hinduism which has years of penance and austerity at the back of the discovery of this truth. That is why, whilst we have had saints who have worn out their bodies and laid down their lives in order to explore the secrets of the soul, we have had none as in the west, who have laid down their lives in exploring the remotest or highest regions of the earth. Our socialism or communism should therefore, be based on non-violence, and on the harmonious co-operation of labour and capital, the landlord and tenant.
There is nothing in the Congress creed or policy that need frighten you. All your fears and misgivings, permit me to tell

you, are those of a guilty conscience. Wipe out the injustices that you may have been consciously or unconsciously guilty of and shed all fear of the Congress and Congressmen. Once you turn a new leaf in the relations between the zamindars and the ryots, you will find us on your side jealously guarding your private rights and property. When I say 'us', I have Pandit Jawaharlal also in mind, for I am sure that on this essential principle of non-violence there is no difference between us. He does indeed talk of the nationalization of property, but it need not frighten you. The nation cannot own property excepting by vesting it in the individuals. It simply ensures its just and equitable use and prevents all possible misues; and I do not think you can have any possible objection to holding your property for the benefit of the ryots. The ryots have themselves no greater ambition than to live in peace and freedom, and they will never grudge your possession of property provided you use it for ihem.[1]

GANDHISM NOT EXCLUSIVELY INDIAN

Before launching upon a criticism of this curious philosophy, it would be profitable to consider if the views of Gandhiji are uniquely Indian. He speaks of 'indigenous socialism'; the 'essential genius' of India; the 'fundamental conception of Hinduism'. Western socialism is based, according to him, on conceptions that are fundamentally opposed to those of Hinduism. He implies, naturally, that his 'indigenous socialism' is much better suited to Indian than our foreign variety. It is important, therefore, to examine this claim to autochthonism.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing new or peculiarly Indian in what Gandhiji says. A large number of western writers have expressed themselves in a more or less similar strain. The agruments vary in their emphasis but their core remains much the same. Class struggle is silly; capital and labour are interdependent and necessary for each other; revolution is wasteful; a synthesis of the contending forces of society is a higher ideal than revolution; enlightened control of profits, wages and prices; the theory of trusteeship—these are the commonest ideas of the west preached by smug bourgeois professors, thinkers and churchmen.

Mr Ramsay MacDonald too, in his socialist days, was against

class war. Says he: "The socialist, therefore, looks with some misgivings upon some recent developments in the conflicts between capital and labour. They are contrary to his spirit; he believes they are both immoral and uneconomic and will lead to disaster. It is only when the worker by brian or by hand does his best for his society that he will create in society that sympathy and support without which the Labour movement will never attain its goal'. And again: 'Both capital and labour have to serve communal ends, and the great task before all who understand the true significance of present-day conflicts, is to discover how this synthesis of function can be brought about' (*Socialism : Critical and Constructive*). Apparently England too had an 'indigenous socialism'. Unfortunately for all indigenous varieties, this particular commodity has ended in the most approved form of Toryism.

Much has been made of the idea of trusteeship as being truly Indian and natural to the country's spirit of non-violence. William Godwin writes in his *Political Justice* : 'The doctrine of the injustice of accumulated property has been the foundation of all religious morality. The object of this morality has been, to excite men by individual virtue to repair this injustice. The most energetic teachers of religion have be irresistibly led to assert the precise truth upon this interesting subject They have taught the rich that they hold their wealth only as a trust; that they are strictly accountable for every atom of their expenditure; that they are merely administrators, and by no means proprietors in chief.[3] Here a century and a half ago, the same idea was put so nearly in its historical perspective. In the face of this statement, the claim of India to this doctrine can only be slender indeed.

The struggle between revolution and reform is old as human misery. Gandhiji's views are essentially what in socialist history is known as reformism. Its language is Indian but is substance is international. The chief interest of reformism lies in maintaining the established order of society. Only it sees the forces of disruption, and sensing danger, wishes to neutralize and quieten them. It therefore, advocates the adminstration of palliatives. All that Gandhiji tells the landlord and the capitalist is that they should improve their relations with their tenants and labourers. All will be well then—no dreaded class-war, no discontent, no revolts and upsettings. Reformism is interested not in securing social justice, but in covering up the ugly fissures of society.

A RAMARAJYA OF PAUPERS

To turn now to Gandhiji's interview. He says : 'The Ramarajya of my dream ensures the rights alike of the prince and the pauper.' This is the keynote to the entire social philosphy of Mahatma Gandhi. Even in his dream Ramarajya, the pauper remains along with the prince ! No doubt, Gandhiji wishes to ensure the pauper's right though, what those rights will be he does not tell us, nor what the wretched pauper will do with them. But, the interesting—almost breath-taking fact is that in even Gandhiji's dream Ramarajya there will be paupers

A Ramarajya of paupers and princes ! Why not ? How else will the noble souls get an opportunity to practise deeds of high-minded philanthropy and thus prove the Hindu conception of human nature !

Why paupers should remain at all in society—the central question of socialism—does not even occur of Gandhiji. It cannot because the existence of paupers is essential for the working out of Gandhian ethics.

Here is the real difference between socialism and Gandhism—not in the 'materialism' of the one and the 'spiritualism' of the other. Those, as commonly used, are meaningless words. The starting point of socialism is the enquiry into the causes of economic inequality : into the origin of princes, landlords, capitalists and paupers; into the secrets of human exploitation. When at the end of the enquiry, the socialist arrives at the root cause, he removes it. The remedy is applied at the source of the social evil.

Gandhism, on the other hand, does not even stop at these questions. It does not occur to it to ask why only a few are in the position of princes, landlords, and capitalists. while the remaining many are paupers or only just a little better than paupers. It accepts the established order with its high and low classes Its only concern is to improve the conduct of the higher classes towards the lower. Not daring to ask where the landlord's and the capitalist's wealth comes from, it asks them in its compassion, to act as trustees of the poor and to use their wealth for the welfare of the latter.

To a socialist, this philosophy amounts to deception—self-deception and deception of the exploited peoples. According to us,

the wealth of the landlord and the capitalist comes from the labour of the ryots and workers, and is, therefore, in the famous phrase of Proudhon, theft. To condone this theft, to let it go unquestioned nay, to sancitify it, is a deceptive philosophy—no matter how unconsciously so.

Not only are the higher classes guilty of theft; they are guilty also of violence. They are guilty of this because the theft of the people's produce is maintained and preserved under the threat of violence But for the law—class law be it noted—and the organized forces of violence behind it, the workers and the ryots would capture tomorrow the lands and factories. As Pandit Jawaharlal writes : 'It is well to realize that those who belong to the favoured and possessing classes retain these positions by methods of coercion alone.' (See 'Some criticims considered' in his *Recent Essays and Writings*)

By not questioning the right to the prince, landlord and capitalist to continue their functions, Gandhiji has signified his tacit approval of this large-scale, organized theft and violence. Nay, the approval is not tacit; it is open and avowed. He has told the landlords that he would resist any attempt to deprive them of their property; and a little earlier he had told the Ahmedabad millowners that it was their moral right to make the money they were making.

THE SHARK, A TRUSTEE FOR THE MINNOW

Gandhiji now tells the upper classes that they must hold their property in trust for their tenants, labourers, etc. now that they are equal sharers in their property with the latter; again that they should hold their property for the benefit of their poor; yet again that they should treat the latter as members of their family. This is Gandhiji's indigenous socialism of the purest type—the harmonious co-operation between labour and capital, landlord and tenant.

Let us first note the indefiniteness and self-contradiction of all this. The landlord, for instance, is a trustee. What part of his wealth must he hold as a trust ? The whole or a portion of it ? If a portion, what and who determines the portion ? If again, his tenants are equal sharers in his wealth, what exactly is meant by an equal share ? Does it mean that half of the property belongs to

the landlord and half to the tenants ? Or does it mean that the landlord and his tenants taken together are each a equal partner ? How can a sharer remain a trustee ? What is the meaning of 'members of a family' ? Is it that the tenants are free to use the palaces of the taluqdars and commission their limousines to drive to the city ? What again is the meaning of harmonious co-operation ? Who will bring about this co-operation ?

These are questions not to be lightly brushed aside. There are others and weightier ones.

Why is the tenant or the labourer an equal owner with his master ? What proof has Gandhiji for his assertions ?

If it is said that the tenants and labourers are equal owners of their master's property because they are its producers, then, why should they not keep to themselves what they produce ? Why should they be asked to hand it over to others who will then act as their trustees ? Is it just to enable the latter to play the pious philanthropist ?

We may consider the same question from the other end : why should the upper classes act as trustees ? They can very well assert, as in fact they do, that their wealth is wholly theirs, earned by their brains and capital and that no one has any claim to it.

If the property that is in the hands of the wealthy is not theirs, no one has any justification in encouraging them to keep it and on top of it to make a show of charity. If, on the other hand, it is theirs, earned rightfully by them, no one has any cause to ask them to give it away to others. If the poor starve, let them; it is not the fault of the wealthy.

Thus, we find Gandhism to be in a serious bog of timid economic analysis, good intentions and ineffective moralizing.

There are only two alternatives : either to prove that the wealth of the wealthy is unjustly acquired and then to demand their expropriation; or to admit that it is rightfully theirs, and then to keep mum in all decency, instead to trotting out pious wishes so that the poor may not feel that they are to be neglected.

The problem is not one of morality or ethics. It is a problem of scientific analysis of property and the method of its production and distribution. This problem should be boldly faced instead of being covered up under a slush of sentimentality. Karl Marx did the greatest service to humanity when he undertook the analysis of capitalist property and proved that it was based on the exploitation

of labour. Bourgeois professors have not yet forgiven Marx for proving scientifically what was previously asserted only in fits of moral indignation. That is why we have so many 'refutations' of his labour theory of value.

If one shirked this analysis, one lost the right to ask anybody to part with his wealth, except in charity.

PULLING OUT THE TIGER'S TEETH

How is this theory of trusteeship to be worked out in practice? How does Gandhiji propose to convert the upper classes into trustees of the lower? By appealing to their sense of morality, by reaching their hearts. 'My objective is to reach your hearts and convert you', he told the U.P. landlords, 'so that you may hold all your private property in trust for your tenants and use its primarily for their welfare.'

I wonder if this too is taken as a peculiarly Indian solution. It is, indeed, a method that is common to all great religious teachers. How much success the previous teachers had—including Jesus Christ—is a fact of history. Now Gandhiji comes along wielding his wand, claiming to perform the old magic.

I do not know if the seven zamindars who had the benefit of Gandhiji's teaching at Kanpur, as they also had previously that of Lord Halifax (Irwin) and Sir Malcolm Hailey, are now acting as the trustees of their tenants. I am aware, however, the Gandhiji's views have found ready and welcome acceptance among the upper classes and that there are some amongst them who are their most eloquent defenders. This is natural. For the acceptance of this philosophy costs them nothing except perhaps an occasional donation to a public cause, the amount of which they soon recover either by virtue of the publicity gained or by a business manoeuvre. At the same time, the philosophy strengthens their position a great deal by giving it a moral sanction.

Gandhiji says in his interview that he has 'always told the millowners that they are not exclusive owners of the mills and workmen are equal sharers in the ownership'. He does not tell us however—and this is the real question—if he has achieved any success in this direction. Gandhiji has been associated with the Labour Union cf Ahmedabad and is one ef its builders. Can he, or any one else say that in the struggle between the Union and the

millowners, a change of heart has been noticed ? Is it not only the fear of the strengh of the Union, the risk of a general strike, the odium of turning down the compromises of a man of Mahatmaji's influence, that lead the millowners to come to terms with Labour ? And have those terms ever meant a real sacrifice for the capitalists, made willingly for the good of their workers ? There is all the difference in the world between a compromise on hours and wages and the theory of trusteeship and family kinship.

WANTED A SCHOOL OF YOGA

If during his lifetime, Gandhiji has not succeeded in reaching the hearts of the upper classes, how does he expect that this will be done after he is removed from the arena of the world ? A great teacher has never been succeeded by an equal. 'Follwers' have always been known to be petty people, chopping texts and quarrelling over interpretations. Does Gandhiji believe that he is leaving behind him a band of people who will carry his mission of conversion to fruition ? If not what other agency has he in mind that will ensure its success ?

Whatever agency it is, it should be evident that it must have two virtues : it must be effective and self-procreating. Hearts must be changed —not of isolated individuals, but of whole classes. And the changed hearts must be handed down from generation to generation. But, the acquired virtues of the heart are not ncecssarily inherited. A good father not infrequently begets an unworthy heir. Therefore, an agency of such permanence is needed as will make it possible for each generation of capitalists and landlords to be inculcated with the spirit of trusteeship.

It is necessary to point out that this conversion will have to be carried on in an environment to which the very idea of trusteeship is foreign—an environment of individualism, of private profit; an environment, furthermore, in which, if a 'trustee' reverts to type there is no punishment, either automatic, as resulting from the laws of his society, or imposed deliberately by some outside agency. If anything, the deserter will find that as far as his own interests go, they are served much better than when he was playing at trusteeship.

Is it possible that an agency that will succeed in this stupendous task of conversion can be created ? Dr. Bhagavan Das

suggests a school of yoga. A great leader may succeed in founding such a school, but that it will bear any fruits, it is difficult to believe.[4]

The question is not one of human nature. When the socialist denies the practicability of the change-of-heart philosophy, he does it for no lack of faith in human nature. Gandhiji has misunderstood 'western' socialism entirely when he says that it is based on the essential selfishness of human nature. Nothing can be further from the truth. Had socialists taken such a low view of human nature, they would never have dared to proclaim as their ideal, a society based on the pursuit of common welfare. Has it not been the most persistent argument against socialism that it assumes an impossible refinement of man's nature ?

Quite contrary to what Gandhiji thinks, the socialist has an unlimited faith in human nature and it is one of the major items of his consturctive programme to remould it. Russia, of whose crude methods so much nonsense has been written, has already achieved a remarkable success in this direction I shall quote the testimony of an impartial observer like Sherwood Eddy : 'In Russia where motives are anticipated ends, the very bigness of the end modifies ordinary pursuits and methods. Immediate needs can be controlled in the light of long time values. Actually where private property in land and all means of production has practically ceased to exist, and where it is virtually impossible to make a private fortune, human service is taking the place of private profit upon such a scale that it is something new under the sun.' And again : 'Humanitarian and higher ethical ends are increasingly utilized as incentives in Soviet Russia. Their faith in human nature and especially in the common man that he will respond favourable to a favourable environment is validating itself in results.'

NOT CHANGE OF HEART BUT SOCIAL REVOLUTION

The socialist's denial of the philosophy of change-of-heart does not spring from his lack of faith in human nature, but from his understanding of human psychology—the relation between behaviour and environment He believes that it is the social environment which shapes human behaviour. A capitalist exploits labour not because he is vicious, but because that

is what the particular society in which he lives wants him to do. If he attempted to do anything else, he would be pushed aside and others would take his place.

The socialist, therefore, believes that if the behaviour of whole groups and classes has to be changed, a change should be effected in the social organization itself. For instance, if the capitalist class has to be prevented from exploiting labour, the organization of society must be so altered as to make that exploitation impossible. That is why Sherwood Eddy in the above citation prefaces his remark about human service taking the place of private profit in Russia by the words 'actually where private property in land and all means of production has practically ceased to exist, and where it is virtually impossible to make a private fortune'. Human nature responds not to the so-called spirit that is said to be in all of us, but to the environment. It will respond favourably to a favourable environment, as it is doing according to Eddy in Soviet Russia.

When the environment encourages, nay, demands, as a matter of fulfilment of its laws, the exploitation of man by man, it is too much to expect that moral precept will do more than touch the heart of a stray individual or so. It cannot transform society.

The socialist wants, therefore, first to change the social environment and acquire full power over the State in order to be in possession of the means of propaganda and education. He creates the predisposing environment and then uses systematic methods of education. How does he change the environment ? By organizing the exploited and oppressed for the overthrow of the established order and the seizure of power. Then he proceeds to build a new society on the new foundations.

There remain a number of minor points in the interview to be considered. It would serve no purpose, and would only detract attention from the central problem, to deal with all of them. Some however, may be considered with profit.

LEADERSHIP OR TAILISM

Gandhiji says : 'But I am quite clear that if a strictly honest and unchallengable referendum of our millions were to be taken, they would not vote for a wholesale expropriation of the propertied classes.' Supposing that were so, what value will that opinion have

for a social scientist, for one who is trying to get a scientific understanding of present society and preparing a scheme for such a social organization from which the present evils would be permanently banished ? What value would he attach to the opinion of backward, ignorant, oppressed masses ? Does not Gandhiji know that till the other day large sections of the British working class were voting Conservative ? In America the workers still vote in overwhelming proportions for the candidates of the Republican and Democratic Parties (which are patently controlled by the upper classes) rater than for Norman Thomas (Socialist) or William Z. Foster (Communist). Should we on that account accept the opinion of these workers as representing what is in their best interests ?

Are there not hundreds of thousands of untouchables in India who would consider it a sacrilege to touch the food of a Brahmin even when invited to do so ? Are there not women in Bihar and the U.P. who would denounce the anti-purdah movement as immoral ?

What the masses vote or do not vote for is not important—their opinion depends wholly on the extent to which they have been made conscious of their rights and potentialities. All the problems of society would have disappeared immediately if the masses really knew what was good for them.

In Russia there was a group of intellectuals known as the 'Economists' who also believed that the workers were already conscious of what they wanted; and therefore the task of leadership was only to help them in the realization of those desires without attempting to add anything to them or to put them in a scientific shape. Lenin wrote a smashing criticism of their view, which he termed 'tailism' (following at the tail end), in a famous pamphlet, *What is to be Done.* In that pamphlet Lenin made it clear that it was the task of the revolunary intellectual to develop a programme for the masses and lead them to its realization. Socialism was a product not of the working class but of individual members of the bourgeois intelligentsia' who addressed themselves to the problems created by capitalism and brought a clear head and a sincere heart to their task. In Lenin's own words : 'The history of all countries testifies to the fact that by its own efforts the working class can only evolve a trade unionist consciousness,—that is, the conviction that it is necessary to coalesce into unions

in order to fight the employers, to demand of the government laws in favour of labour, etc. The doctrine of socialism grew up out of the philosophical, historical, economic theories that were elaborated by educated members of the propertied classes, by the intelligentsia.'

Referendum is a poor and untrustworthy tool in the hands of the social architect.

NATIONALIZATION

'Once you turn a new leaf in the relations between the zamindars and the ryots, you will find us on your side jealously guarding your private rights and property. When I Say "us", I have Pandit Jawaharlal also in mind, for I am sure that on this essential principle of non-violence there is no difference between us. He does indeed talk of nationalization of property, but it need not frighten you. The nation cannot own property excepting by vesting it in individuals. It simply ensures its just and equitable use and prevents all possible misuse and I do not think you can have possible objection to holding your property for the benefit of the ryots.'

I confess that in recent years I have read few things that have caused me so much surprise as this statement. Such a curious mix-up of ideas and issues it has rarely been my luck to come across. It is not my purpose to offer any explanation on behalf of Pandit Jawaharlal. I have no doubt that when free he will make his position clear to Gandhiji and the zamindars. I must, however, point out that when Gandhiji made this statement *Whither India?* and the other writings connected with it had already appeared; so I cannot see how anybody who had read them could have made these remarks about their author.

Gandhiji assumes that, because there is agreement between him and Jawaharlal on non-violence, the latter would jealously guard the private rights and properties of the zamindars. In 'Some Criticisms Considered', Pandit Jawaharlal made it clear while discussing non-violence that for him the method was of secondary importance. 'However important the method may be I entirely fail to understand how it can take the place of the objective and know the direction before a single step can be taken.' As for the method itself, i.e., non-violence, he makes it clear that he has

accepted it only as a weapon in the struggle against imperialism. There too he does not consider it to be infallible. 'But I have made it clear on many occasions that non-violence is no infallible creed with me and although I greatly prefer it to violence I prefer freedom with violence to subjection with non-violence.'[5] In the context in which Gandhiji is using the term, i.e., a method for adjustment of group interests within the nation after Swaraj, it seems to me that Jawaharlal leaves no doubt that he will not hesitate to use the coercive arm of the State. 'The question of violence or non-violence may arise, and indeed is bound to arise, in another form after the conquest of the State power. There may be attempts to upset the new form of Government by reactionary groups. Will 'G' (one of the critics of *Whither India*—J.P.N.) advice the new government to use the resources of the State to coerce these elements into submission or does he think thank that the religious and philanthropic argument should be used to convert them ? Then again the new government may pass laws which, carrying out the will of the great majority of the people, seek to de-vest privileged groups. Will 'G' then advise these groups to submit to the majority opinion or to resist; and if the latter, how should their resistance be met ?[6]

Whatever may be 'G's' answer. Jawaharlal's seems to be obvious.

In the face of such statements—and *Recent Essays and Writings* is full of them—what warrant Gandhiji had to bracket Jawaharlal with himself in this matter it is difficult to understand.

It is Gandhiji's remarks about nationalization, however, that take the prize. Jawaharlal talks of nationalization but no one need be frightened; the nation cannot own property without vesting it in individuals. Is it possible that Gandhiji really believes in this arrant nonsense ? Even the veriest tyro in modern economics knows what nationalization means. Will Gandhiji tell us in whom the ownership of the State Railways is vested ? Who owns the nationalized mines, banks and factories of Soviet Russia ?

Gandhiji seems to confuse property which is for individual consumption with property which is used for producing property of the former kind. If Gandhiji means that the nation cannot own houses, clothes, cycles, gramophones, tables, chairs, except through individual ownership, no one will quarrel with him. Nationalization of property did never mean that individuals will not have

their own houses, clothes, etc.

When the socialist talks of nationalization of property, he means functional property, viz, land, mines, factories. Not only is there no difficulty about the nation owning such property but to vest their ownership in individuals is unjust, unreasonable and unscientific. They are large institutions with which are bound up the interests of the whole community; and so the community must own them.

That will mean that servants of the Community will work these institutions, as they are doing in Soviet Russia; and their proceeds would be shared by the whole community according to some agreed scheme.

SOCIALISM THROHGH KHADI

In the interview that we have just considered, Gandhiji defined his indigenous socialism as co-ordination and co-operation between capital and labour, landlord and tenant. There is also another type of Gandhian 'socialism'—though it did not find a mention in the interview. It has for its central doctrine the idea that we should eschew machinery, and in its place develop cottage industries. The arguments against machinery are varied, the chief of which are that it leads to violence and exploitation and creates unemployment, particularly in a country with such a large population as India.

The criticism that machinery means violence and exploitation is not so much a criticism of machinery itself, as that of the system which uses machinery for private profit, i.e, of capitalism. Some people believe that machinery makes capitalism inevitable, Soviet Russia clearly disproves this There we find a social order rising literally on the foundations of machinery and yet being as free from exploitation as any society of idyllic fancy. There is violence indeed in Soviet Russia, but it is not engendered by the new economic order. It is revolutionary violence —political violence, if you please—made necessary by the task of destroying the old order of privilege, exploitation and violence.

The argument about unemployment is a persistent fallacy in this country. It needs, therefore, to be examined in some detail.

It is commonly believed by those who are opposed to machinery that it causes unemployment. 'If we installed a machine,' they argue, 'which does the work of ten labourers, it would displace that

many people from employment.' It does that, no doubt, but it is forgotten that at the same time it does much more—it creates new employments, new demands, new standards of living.

Let us take a country like the United States of America. When the Thirteen Colonies rebelled and won their independence, the level of production was very low and so was their population. Now, according to the above hypothesis, as the country began to be mechanized, unemployment should have grown in a corresponding proportion. Nothing of the sort actually happened. It may be urged that foreign markets and imperialism kept the American workers employed at home. But this too was not true in fact. Till the war, the export of American manufacturers was next to nothing. Even during the period of the post-War boom, I believe, not more than ten per cent of the total American manufacture was exported. The reason why there was no unemployment in the U.S.A., on the scale that should have been expected on the hypothesis of the anti-machinist, was that, for various causes, the standard of living of the American workers and farmers went on ascending, as compared with other capitalist countries. That made it possible for most of the American manufacturers to be consumed at home.

This is not to say that there was no unemployment in the U.S.A. Unemployment there was indeed, but it was periodic and was not due to mechanization and in proportion to it. Its cause was different, which I shall consider below. What the American experience does show it that if the purchasing power of the people goes on rising proportionately to production, no amount of mechanization will produce unemployment, unless production has crossed the saturation point of human needs—a very distant point at present.

Let us take another country. Soviet Russia believes in machinery more than the Americans ever did. The Russians are mechanizing both industry and agriculture at a pace that has staggered every one. Yet, from all accounts, Russia is the only country where there is no unemployment at a time when in the rest of the civilized world it has become the foremost social problem How will the anti-machinists explain this ?

The answer will be found in the origins of unemployment under capitalism. What do we find there ? We find that production has been curtailed ruthlessly; factories are lying idle; credit is frozen; warehouses are glutted. At the same time we find people

who are in dire need of all the things that are locked up in warehouses are wantonly destroyed by the State and capitalists. On the one hand, there is said to be overproduction; on the other, an appalling underconsumption.

Can there be anything more contradictory than this ? Yet it is one of the most persistent characteristics of capitalism It is clear that in a world where the vast majority of people live in dire need there can be no overproduction. All that can be produced today, and a thousand times more, can be consumed without any difficulty. But, then, where is the rub ? The rub is in the fact that the poverty of the people, their lack of purchasing power, does not allow them to buy the goods that are lying idle or being dumped into the sea or thrown into the bonfire. The purchasing power of the great majority of the people in capitalist countries comes from the wages they receive; and the latter are kept down as low as possible by the capitalists so that their profits may be the highest possible. Thus, a vicious circle is drawn. The capitalist goes on manufacturing goods so that by selling them he may draw his profit, at the same time he restricts the consuming power of the community by his policy of wages. Naturally, there is maladjustment between production and consumption; and he periodically finds that he has produced 'too much'. Then he restricts production and throws his workers out of employment.

Now, it should be clear that if goods were produced for consumption and not for the profit of a few, all that was produced would be consumed. There would be no limit to the purchasing power of the people except the supply of goods itself, because 'wages' would represent under those conditions the sum total of consumption goods produced. Overproduction would arise only when the needs of the community have been satisfied, and these, as I have already indicated, are almost insatiable. Restriction of production and de-mechanization would not be necessary till that point has been reached.

In India that point will take a very long time indeed to reach. Imagine a well-kept upper middle class household : a smart house with a neat little garden; furniture; rugs and carpets; electricity, a radio-set; perhaps a Chevrolet; a modest library; music; wholesome and nourishing food; good clothes; enough leisure for recreation; reading and writing. Now, consider that you have to raise the standard of the poorest Indian home to this level. Will you kindly

compute how many times our productive resources must be multiplied to make that possible in the course of, let us say, fifty years ?

To run away from machinery, to take shelter in small industries, is again a symptom of the disease we considered above—the fear of facing the issue. The examination of present society must be avoided to avoid inconvenient conclusions. It is less troublesome to take recourse to sentimentality and idyllic fancies. Therefore, instead of tracing the real offender, the guilt is readily fastened on poor, inoffensive objects of steel and mortar, which, in reality, are a blessing for mankind.

So much for the theoretical position of the antimachinist. His position from the point of view of practice is still worse. The fact that machinery slowly displaced handicrafts all over the world must have had good reasons for it. The reasons, in fact, were excellent, viz., that machinery makes a higher return of profits possible and holds all the points of village in the game of economic competition with small scale production.

These reasons still hold good. Those who have capital to invest cannot eschew machinery. On the other hand, handicrafts have no chance against modern industry. We see in India too that, in spite of the blighting influences of imperialism, there is a steady progress in machine production. As soon as the imperialist obstruction is out of the way, there will be an absolute fever of mechanization, though, I should add parenthetically that under capitalism the prospects of mechanization or industrialization are very limited in India. Just consider the Sugar Rush. The Government made a gesture of goodwill to the Indian capitalist and created an opportunity for him to pile up huge profits by levying a sugar tariff. At once mills went up literally like mushrooms. No amount of counterpropaganda in favour of hand-made *gur* could have stopped that avalanche.

How, in the face of these economic tendencies, is the gospel of small industries to spread ? There is no enlightenment from the quarter to which one naturally turns for an answer. There is only a mouthful of sentimentality.

Unless dictatorial methods are used, it would neither he possible to de-mechanize present production nor prevent its future mechanization. In existing society it is not possible for the small producer to acquire such dictatorial powers. His is not a key

position as that of the capitalist on the one hand and the worker on the other. He is not even in the position of the peasant, who in the conditions of India, has a unique importance. If, however, there are idealists who imagine that they would succeed in this task, I shall only ask them if it is common sense deliberately to destroy the productive powers of society when only a better control over them would yield all the moral and material values they dream of creating ?

To conclude. Gandhism may be a well-intentioned doctrine. I personally think it is. But even with the best of intentions, it is, I must admit—it gives me no pleasure to do so—a dangerous doctrine. It is dangerous because it hushes up real issues and sets out to remove the evils of society by pious wishes. It thus deceives the masses and encourages the upper classes to continue their domination.

Notes and References

1. This refers to the restriction which Gandhi had imposed upon himself after his release from prison on 23 August, 1933, on grounds of health as a result of a fast, before the expiry of his sentence which was to run till 3 August 1934. On 13 September, 1933, he issued a statement saying that till 3 August, 1934, he would concentrate on work relating to the uplifit of Harijans (his word for the so-called untouchables among the Hindus) and desist from courting imprisonment by offering civil disobedience.
2. *The Leader*, 3 August, 1943.
3. Godwin's comment on this teaching is very interesting : 'The defect of this system is that they rather excite us to palliate our injustice than to forsake is.' And again · 'If religion had spoken out, and told us it was just that all men should receive the supply of their wants we should presently have been led to suspect that a gratuitous distribution to be made by the rich was a very indirect and ineffectual way of arriving at this object. The experience of all ages has taught us, that this system is productive only of a very precarious supply. The principal object which it seems to propose, is to place this supply in the disposal of a few, enabling them to make a show of generosity with what is not truly their own, and to purchase the gratitude of the poor by the payment of a debt. It is a system of clemency and charity instead of a system of justice. It fills the rich with unreasonable pride by the spurious denominations with which it decorates their acts; and the poor with servility, by leading them to regard the slender comforts they obtain, not as their incontrovertible due, but as the good pleasure and grace of their opulent neighbours.'

4, I may be reminded here of the Brahamins of ancient India But what was the function of the Brahmins ? Briefly, to protect and strengthen, by moral and religious sanction, the established order. No amount of intellectual heterodoxy was disagreeable to the Brahmins, if the social order was left undisturbed. Ever movement of social reform found the power of the Brahmins arrayed against it. It is a mistake to imagine that the Brahmin was engaged in mitigating social difference. If anything, he strengthened and buttressed them. True, he preached charity; but charity has ever been known to be the ally of vested interests.

I should point out that I am speaking here only of the Brahmins as a class and not of individual revolutionary Brahmin learders.

5 *Recent Essays and Writings*, p. 33.

6 Ibid. pp. 35-36

22

DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

I do not consider the rights to property as fundamental in the same sence as the rights to freedom of expression and association. In fact, I would be happy if property rights were separated from fundamental rights, though the values and norms of democracy would still require that the powers of the executive to interfere with property, even in the public interest, be appropriately regulated by law.

Nor, again, have I upheld any convention, either that of seniority or any other, including the one recommended by the Law Commission. My plea is a very simple one, there being a national consensus—with the Government, the opposition and public opinion, agreeing—that the independence of the judiciary must be preserved, it is necessary to provide in the Constitution appropriate procedures to secure that objective. In respect to the appointment of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, which is only a part of the question of independence of the judiciary, the present position is that the Prime Minister (acting, of course, through the President) is completely free to appoint anyone he or she may wish. Even the President of the USA, who in certain respect is more powerful, constitutionally, than the Prime Minister of India, does not enjoy such unlimited power in this respect. It is curious that in appointing judges of the Supreme Court the Constitution

*Letter addressed to to Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, June 27, 1973.

should require the President, i.e , the Prime Minister, to follow a certain procedure of consultation, but that he should have untrammeled authority in appointing the Chief Justice. It should be obvious that as long as the seniority convention lasted, no question of procedure arose.

I cannot conceive of any person, committed to democracy, disagreeing with this simple proposition. It is not a question of doubting your or any one else's good faith. No individual or party can remain in power for all times. When we make laws, more so, the fuudamental law of the land, we have to think not of ourselves but of generations to come.

Coming to your remarks about what I have said in my statement about the competing rights of democracy and socialism, I would again submit that "we" should cease to think in terms of "ourselves" being in power forever. You say that, "It has been our endeavour throughout our struggle for freedom and during these 25 years as an independent nation to reconcile the two. I am perhaps more condfident than you that we can achieve this reconciliation".

Suppose I grant you that, what guarantee is there that another government with other ideas of democracy and socialism will also be able to reconcile the two ?

Here also my plea is quite simple. The Supreme Court has decided that Parliament has powers even to abrogate the fundamental rights, including the rights to freedom of expression, association, movement, etc. My plea is that Parliament must agree to provide for constitutional constraints upon its own power, so as to prevent another Parliament in the future, whose commitment to democracy may not be particularly strong and whose concept of socialism may be very different from that of the present Government, from extinguishing the fundamental freedoms of the citizen and establishing a dictatorship. The argument that no Constitution can stand in the way of the people's will, which more often than not means the will of a minority of determined and ruthless political manipulators usually backed by the force of arms, betrays defeatism and confusion of through on the part of those arguing in this manner, or it heralds the infiltration of trojan horses into the ranks of democratic socialists.

It was in view of these considerations that I had appealed to you as Prime Minister to appoint a Parliamentary committee to go into these questions and report to Parliament, which might enact

the necessary laws and constitutional amendments.

My statement was "an earnest appeal" to you, and if your letter is your considered response to that appeal, I can only confess to a sense of utter disappointment and deep distress. Is it a vain hope that you may still be persuaded to give further thought to this vital and farreaching question ?

23

FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Democracy in an undeveloped and backward country with a vast and mostly illiterate population, innumerable diversities, and wide social and economic inequalities is indeed a rare phenomenon. And that is should have survived for 25 years, that have seen three wars; at least two disastrous famines; growing disparity between the rich and the poor; nearly half of the population living below the subsistence level; multiplicity of parties led by squabbling politicians, most of them concerned more with themselves than the country; galloping corruption, infecting all levels of politics and government; growing unemployment; utter confusion and lack of direction and purposefulness on the educational front resulting in swelling at an alarming rate of the ranks of the uneducated idle youth; and other similar ills is nothing but a miracle.

Several explanations have been given for this miracle There is no space to go into them here. My own explanation is three-fold. One is the fact that, by and large, India's freedom was won by peaceful methods of mass action devised by Gandhiji which provided tho readymade popular base that democracy needs I have no doubt that had India wrested her freedom by violence, democracy, even if established in form, would have been only a facade for some kind of distatorship.

The second explanation that occurs to me lies in the transformation, under Gandhiji's leadership, of the elitist Indian National Congress into a mass organization, with millions of members and

branches spread over the entire country and penetrating deep in the countryside. At independence, that provided a readymade mass party to operate the machinery of democracy. Furthermore, the way the Congress functioned in those days, from the lowest to the highest committee, was in itself a training in democracy both for the people at large and for the thousands of political activists. I still recall many a lively and, at times, stormy debate in the A.I.C.C., during which we, the young Congress Socialists of those days, not only crossed swords with giants like the Sardar, but challenged fearlessly even the ideas and programmes of Gandhiji himself. Further still, the way Gandhiji treated us, his critics, was another unforgettable lesson in democracy, which requires that dissent be not only tolerated but also allowed full freedom and treated with respect.

My third explanation which is perhaps the most important, is to be found in the standards of public conduct and the democratic values that had come to be established in the course of the national movement from the time of Dadabhai Naoroji down to that of Mahatma Gandhi. It is fashionable these days to say that there is no place for morality in politics and that whatever helps to achieve the end is moral. But democracy, and still more so democratic socialism cannot function properly except on the basis of certain commonly accepted values of life and of public conduct.

In all these three respects, alas, there has been a steady deterioration in the last quarter century, putting into serious doubts about the future of our democracy. The Congress ceased to be a movement soon after it came to power in 1947 (though Gandhiji, it may be recalled, had other ideas about it) and became a mere election machine. Even so, it retained to a considerable extent its democratic character, its mass organisational structure and inner vitality. All that has radically changed in the past two or three years. Paradoxical though it may sound, the Congress despite its massive electoral victories in 1971 and 1972, is today a little more than a hollow shell. It has no inner strength and substance, and is presently kept going on huge doses of funds and the charisma of its leader. There is little or no internal democracy left in it, and its State leaders and Chief Ministers are mostly handpicked men, rather than leaders in their own right. In fact, a systematic effort has been made to cut the ground from under the feet of such national and State leaders as have a base of their own

in the party and among the people. Even when Mr. Nehru had a larger majority in Parliament than his daughter has today, he did not have the power to lop off the tall poppies in the organization at will; he had to take recourse to such devious ways as the so-called Kamaraj Plan.

DANGER TO DEMOCRACY

The present state of affairs might suit Indiraji's style of leadership, but it spells ruin for the Congress as a democratic organization and *ipso facto* for Indian democracy itself. For, it is not reasonable to expect an organization that does not practise democracy in its internal affairs to be much concerned about preserving democracy in the affairs of the nation. The "democratic centralism", a Russian euphemism for the dictatorship of the leader, towards which Indiraji's Congress seems to be consciously led, is bound, if left unchecked, to re-cast Indian democracy in its own mould.

This drive or drift—to me it appears to be the former—has two consequences; one for democracy and another for socialism. In regard to the first, the consequence is that dissent is no longer valued or welcomed. It needs to be emphasized here that dissent—in other words, freedom of thought—is not just on intellectual luxury, as our communist friends would like to make out, but a necessary catolytic agent to which society owes its progress, its revolutions, its technological and scientific advances. Without dissent society must become stagnant and moribund. But unfortunately, in our intellectual words today, there is an insidious climate of fear spreading. All the universities and research institutions being dependent wholly or largely on government grants, teachers and researchers alike feel constrained in the pervading climate in expressing their views freely. The few that *dara* are made to suffer in one way or another. The conformers, on the other hand, can count on all the prizes there are.

The situation has been brilliantly summed up by a distinguished scholar in a private conversation : the intellectual has two choices before him today : (a) if he wants to preserve his intellectual integrity he must go back to the old Brahmanic ideal of simple living, of which prehaps the last illustrious example was the late Bharat Ratna Dr. Pandurang Vaman Kane, who did his monumental

work on the Dharmashastras in a room 10 ft. × 12 ft. in a Bombay chawl, and who, while Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University, preferred to travel by tram to his office rather than use the car to which he was entitled; (b) if he wants to enjory the modest comforts that the U.G.C. scales promise, he must be prepared sooner or later, to conform.

The situation in regard to the press is even worse. While there is no overt curtailment of the freedom of the press, the Government has many covert ways to discipline, if not editors of integrity, the proprietors and publishers. These ways are being increasingly used, and the result is writ large on the face of our daily and periodical press. How long will the brave exceptions survive depends upon what those who believe in freedom of the mind do. The cause is not quite lost yet. But, it cannot be saved without a conscious, courageous and determined fight. Even a few free and valiant spirits, if they are vigilant and put up a united resistance, can save it and with it the cause of Indian democracy.

In regard to socialism, the consequence of the drive towards "democratic centralism", or personal leadership, at the cost of a healthy democratic socialist party, is that more and more economic power, in addition to the political power that it already enjoys, is passing into the affluent class of the so-called "committed" bureaucratic elite, of which the "politbureau" is naturally the Prime Minister's secretariat. For propaganda purposes, we still hear noises about democratic socialism. But there is little in the present bureaucratic socialism that resembles democratic socialism, which requires decentralization, industrial democracy, education of the people, particularly the elite, in the values of socialism and the need to practise them in their lives, and many other things. That obviously is a difficult path to follow, and it does not square with the Prime Minister's style of politics. The question is whether bureaucratic socialism can succeed. It seems to me that it cannot, unless its full logic is accepted—totalitarianism. Will this country allow that ? Does the Prime Minister herself understand all its implications ? Do her colleagues in the Congress, except for the ex-cardholders and cryptos, understand them ?

Turning finally to the democratic values and standards of public conduct evolved during the freedom movement, which according to me have helped greatly to sustain our democracy, the present situation appears utterly hopeless. No doubt, there has

been a steady erosion of these values since independence, but latterly there has been a precipitous fall. All means now are right means as long as they help to achieve the end. There are no holds barred.

The consequences of cold machiavellism for a backward society, lacking the infrastructure of democracy and the counter-vailing powers of a developed society, can only be disastrous for India's democracy. A case like that of Mr. Maudling—no one can claim that British politics is any less "modern" than India—is unthinkable in this country. Equally unthinkable are the kind of political and administrative exposures—think of Jack Anderson, for instance—that the Western press makes from time to time. Can any Indian pressman hope to get at the bottom of the Nagarwala case, for instance, and expose it in the press ?

DEGRADATION OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION

The way election funds have been collected in recent years, the huge election expenditures incurred, the large-scale impersonation, the "capturing" of polling booths—these and other similar practices threaten to reduce elections to a mere formality.

The galloping political corruption is affecting and degrading, because of the predominant positton politics occupies in an undeveloped society, the entire gamut of national life; business, whether it is private or public; administration; the professions; education; even customs, manners and personal relations. Let alone democracy and socialism, the most important question is, can a nation without a moral fibre survive ? It is not for the politicians alone to give the answer; it is for everyone of us.

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YOUTH FOR DEMOCRACY

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

In a message to the World Union Parliament of Youth the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, had said " . . . a new Force has come into being—Youth Power. All over the world young people are restless and engaged in one form of protest or other . . . there is much to be restless about to protest against. . . . " Among the objects of protest she mentioned wars, racialism, domination, inequalities, etc.

Youth in our country too has much to protest against. In recent years our educational institutions have been scenes of a variety of student protests. But these have generally suffered from localism and narrow and immediate concerns, though occasionally there have been protests with wider aims, such as those organised by the Tarun Shanti Sena and others for a more meaningful and life-related education.

The question of a revolutionary change in education is no doubt of prime importance, but the issue to which I am drawing attention in this appeal is of even deeper and indeed fundamental importance. It is the issue of democracy. Looked at from the point of view of the people, this is of fundamental and crucial importance, because only under a democratic system can the people, including the youth, play their part in their sovereign capacity. Of course, democracy should mean much fuller opportunity for people's participation in the democratic process, but this is not the occasion to go into that subject here.

ELECTORAL PROCESS

Unfortunately, this very precondition of the people's civic life is in danger today from various sides. The most serious danger comes from vitiation of the electoral process. The seminal role of elections in the democratic process, and their significance for the people, can hardly be over-emphasized. It is during elections that the people are able to assert their sovereignty and exercise their democratic birth-right of choosing their rulers.

But, since independence, elections have been growing more and more irrelevant to the people and to the democratic process. The reason is that money, falsehood, corruption and physical force have combined to erode steadily the very meaning and substance of elections. Election costs have been growing by leaps and bounds, and cases have been reported in which a single State Assembly candidate is said to have spent between Rs. 30 and Rs. 40 lakhs and a Lok Sabha candidate as much as Rs. 60 to Rs. 90 lakhs But even if the average cost is one-tenth of these staggering amounts, the poor man's candidate has no chance whatever. Nor can representatives capable of spending such large sums be ever expected to work for the poor. In the same way, the vice of impersonation, feed on secret funds; and the use of physical force, supported by powerful political and caste interests, have been growing at an alarming rate. Corruption of the electoral machinery commonly manifested in intimidation and buying up of presiding officers, has been growing apace alongside of corruption in other fields.

Will our youth continue to look on idly at this strangulation of the democratic process at its very birth ? Surely, there cannot be a more important issue which should move the youth to action. Time for action is here and now. What form their action should take is for the youth themselves to decide. My only recommendation would be that, in keeping with the spirit and substance of democracy, it must be scrupulously peaceful and non-partisan.

AN APPEAL TO THE YOUTH

A small section of our students is divided amongst parties; but the vast bulk of them, as also of the non-school-going youth, is unattached. It is to this large body that I am appealing. Hapilly,

there are some non-party organisations of youth such as the Tarun Shanti Sena, and the Kishore Bharti These and similar bodies should take the lead in mobilising their brothers and sisters But my advice would be not to wait for anyone's initiative in this matter. Wherever the required leadership may exist, spontaneous organisations of the youth, which I suggest be named 'Youth For Democracy' should spring up. The Youth For Democracy should really be more a movement than an organization. Spontaniety and independent local action should be marks of this movement. Co-ordination and pooling of effort snould follow. The youth themselves should be able to raise the necessary rosources and create their local and national leadership.

Though general elections to Parliament and State assemblies are yet a few years ahead, there are some State assembly elections to be held in the near future, such as those of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Tripura. These elections should be the immediate occasion for youth action of the type I am appealing for.

Students in several parts of the world have played a decisive role in shaping the political destiny of their country. Thailand is the most recent example. It is time for Youth Power in India to enter the national arena and play a decisive role in establishing the primacy of the people and securing their victory over the power of money, falsehood and brute force.

25

FIRST THINGS FIRST

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

A situation has arisen in the country in which, on the one hand, a myriad of problems clamour for solution and, on the other a medley of policies contend for implementation. Except for the sycophants and apologists of the regime, impartial, highly competent observers and students of the national scene paint a uniformly dismal picture, with hardly any relieving feature. No doubt the pro-CPI, in other words, the pro-Soviet, press continues to blame everything on "right reaction" and "left adventurism", if not on the C I.A. and such like, though lately it has begun to lash out at some of the closest colleagues of the Prime Minister in the Government and the Party. Indeed, the Prime Minister herself has not escaped their critical attention, if not attack, as recall, to mention only one instance, Shri Bhupesh Gupta's homily to her in the *New Age* to have sense enough to distinguish between the benevolent and malevolent superpowers. Apparently, all the Brezhnev's "tovarisching" and cooing to Comrade Nixon and the massive economic deals considered between them have failed to bring about even an elementary understanding of the new world that is emerging before everyone's eyes.

Lest I should be misunderstood, let me hasten to add that I was an enthusiastic supporter of the Indo-Soviet Treaty—as my press statement of the time will bear out—and, far from wanting to weaken it, would like to see it strengthened if possible. But I am also sensible to the fact that, in the first place, Russia is unable

to meet our economic development needs; and, in the second place, an unaligned and a major regional power like India must diversify its economic and strategic dependence by forging and strengthening mutual ties with other nations and communities that may be in a position to help us meaningfully, such as the West European Economic Community, Japan and the U.S.A. I would also like to see our relations with China improve faster, if possible.

The Prime Minister, by the way, deserves to be warmly complimented for speaking up so forthrightly about the danger of the world's giants settling the fate of the rest of us. Happily, however, the fact of the West European Community, the emergence of Japan as an economic giant and the quick march forward of another Asian giant. China, as well as India's own growing strength, despite present difficulties, are likely to put off the Orwellian nightmare long enough to enable us and other nations to fashion not only their own future but also perhaps a better world in which neither armaments nor wealth nor size will be the arbiters of humanity's fate. However, I have digressed.

PERVADING GLOOM

It will be presumptuous on my part to pretend that I have any cut and dried solutions for the baffling problems that beset us. Those problems themselves have been so ably discussed in the national press that it would be superfluous to deal with them here : I would only be adding to the pervading gloom. I should also note that quite a few competent writers have put forth constructive suggestions which deserve the attention of the authorities concerned. For my part, I would not have dared to launch upon this exercise but for the prompting of some friends. When a few months ago I had written on the future of democracy, which was published under different titles—"A Hopeless Situation" was one—it had attracted unexpected attention and, predictably, liberal abuse in the pro-CPI press, particularly in the pseudo and more vulgar sections of it. Some people seem to be simple-minded enough to believe—they call it "tactic"—that by abusing and reviling anyone who criticizes the Prime Minister, they will be able to nestle closer to her and perchance draw her tighter into their net !

At that time some friends, who have great regard for the

Prime Minister but who are also greatly worried over the deteriorating situation in the country, had suggested that having painted the negative or critical side, I should try to be positive and make constructive suggestions. It is largely in response to their wish that I am venturing to write this series of articles. I should have done this much earlier, but for the most shattering crisis of my life through which I have lived in the past few months and from which, I fear, I shall never recover. It is of some satisfaction to me, however, that owing to the delay, these articles are appearing first in a journal with which I happened to be so intimately connected.

I have entitled this series "First Things First". There is so much wrong with our polity, economy and society in general that it is really a bewildering question to decide where to begin, which problem to take first, where to apply the knife. The thought that has guided me in finding the answer is that one must go down to the root, the foundation, no matter how remote it might appear from the problems that are uppermost in the minds of the people—or for that matter, of the Members of Parliament—whose solutions they rightly demand without delay. It may be possible, I am sure, to do something urgently to relieve the people's suffering, something about better availability of food, water and other essential articles of life; something about the runaway prices. Perhaps the experts, backed by the necessary political will—a vain hope, one fears, unless the present school-boyish competition in slogan-mongering is replaced with hard-headed down-to-earth practical politics—could do a little to relieve the pressing distress. But that will not be a radical solution, and the problems will continue to beset us—even more fearsomely, one suspects. It will be a case of *marz badhtaa gaya jyon jyon dawaa kee.* (Illness goes on increasing with the treatment.)

This is why I am pleading that we must go to the very roots. Let the palliatives be applied, but let the radical cure be found and unflinchingly administered. Here too the question of political will shall be decisive. But, it is clear to me that indecision in the matter will spell eventual destruction of this country. I hate to believe that our political leaders, whether of the ruling or of the opposition parties, who in view of the deplorable apathy of the educated elite of the country, and the consequent absence of a strong and principled public opinion, the passivity of the masses and the aimless,

often petty-minded outbursts of the youth, happen to be in the position of the sole arbiters of our fate, will be so selfish, so short-sighted, so lacking in patriotism and courage that they would rather let the country go down the cliff than rise to the occasion and put their shoulders together to save it from the threatening disaster. Parties, groups, even individuals that are stooges of one or the other super-power will, no doubt, do their best to take advantage of the chaos in which the country may soon be plunged if the present drift continues, to establish themselves in power on behalf of their principals, be it in the name of "revolution" or in that of "saving" the country from being taken over by its "enemies" within and without. But surely the patriots whose loyalty, irrespective of political differences, is to this country and no other, far outnumber the open or secret stooges. It is to them that I am addressing these thoughts.

FALL IN MORAL STANDARDS

As I diagnose the root cause of the country's critical state of health, I identify it unhesitatingly as the precipitous fall in the moral standards of our public life. Not only has the fall been precipitous as compared, let us say, with only a decade ago, but there is also no sign of any slowing down of the process. There is no branch of public life—politics, government, business, education, trade unions, social work and the rest—that is left untouched. The difference is only one of degree, or one of opportunity. Not only the ruling Congress but also the Opposition parties are stricken with disease, as the interregnum between 1967 and 1972 had sadly witnessed.

To some my diagnosis may appear too idealistic, too remote from the country's urgent maladies to be of any practical value. This exactly is the core of our national problem. We have become so cynical, so resigned, so reconciled to whatever may happen that nothing seems to outrage our conscience—barring honourable exceptions—or to stir us to action. Opposition leaders may, of course, shout and protest, try to exploit politically specific official lapses, call a *bandh* and even do worse such as committing arson and destroying national property. All that, however, has become a mere ritual which the common man has learnt to take in his stride, He somehow senses, no doubt partly from experience, that

his condition is likely to remain much the same even when the *bandh* leaders of today come to occupy the seats of power tomorrow But what about that large body of our educated elite and our university youth (who unfortunately are wont to waste a lot of their energies on trifling questions) who could take non-partisan and constructive action and give a lead to the people and help create a climate of public opinion which could be a deterrent to unethical conduct of politicians or businessmen or any other section or group whose action degrades national life and saps the foundations of our democracy ?

DEMOCRATIC ETHICS

One can understand the apathy, or even opposition, to moral values in politics, or in other fields of national life, of those who are open enemies of democracy or of those who while wearing its mask really believe in one or another kind of dictatorship; limited (who is to set the limits ?) or unlimited, party of military or whatever. But in a country that only recently won its freedom chiefly through peaceful mass action or Satyagraha and constructive work and where Mahatma Gandhi and other architects of its freedom like Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Azad, Rajaji, and others are still remembered with reverence and gratefulness—is it possible to conceive that in such a country the true believers in democracy do not still far outnumber its open or secret enemies ? Parenthetically, the situation would surely have been different if India had won its independence through an armed struggle. If I am right in thinking thus, may I ask my democratic friends, irrespective of their party affiliations, whether democracy can function without a moral base ?

The subject of democratic ethics if fairly vast and political philosophers and scholars have written much about it. It is not my intention to enter into a philosophical discussion of the subject here. It will suffice to point out a few salient features with a practical bearing on our condition. As I understand it, the very foundation of democracy is belief in man—individual man—not as a means but as an end. It is this faith in man, in his worth and dignity, in his rights and responsibilities, that distinguishes democracy from non-democracy. Quite a number of corollaries follow from this basic faith. One is that the citizen is entitled to

be enlightened about public issues. This requires not only a free press and platform and other means of mass communication. It also means that he is told the truth, or is enabled to find out the truth, so that he can exercise his sovereign right of franchise intelligently. The voters, being the ultimate masters, the democratic ethic requires that elections are free and fair. The ethic also requires that those whom the voters put in positions of power serve them honestly and selflessly. Corruption, nepotism, fraud and lying are the enemies of democracy.

Sadly enough, whenever I have raised the question of ethics and politics with my Congress friends, I have been told that there was always corruption in the organisation, that election funds were always raised in the same manner as today, be it by Sardar Patel or Shri S.K. Patil, that power was always concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister, that there were always factions and infighting in the Congress, that the "High Command" had always had a hand in the selection of Chief Ministers, etc., etc. My reply has always been : (a) granting for argument's sake (though we might thereby be doing great injustice to the Sardar and Nehru and others) that all that was true, did Indiraji have to split the Congress only to continue the old wrongs and immoral practices ? and (b) in politics, as in everything else in life, are there not limits behind which it is fatal to go ? Body temperature beyond a certain degree would mean sure death, water heated beyond a certain point will no longer be water, food in moderate quantity will give health but consumed immoderately it is sure to lead to illness and worse. Quantity changing into quality is a philosophical observation not confined only to Marxian dialectics.

I know politics is not for saints I am no saint myself presuming to preach a sermon to others. But politics, at least under a democracy, must know the limits which it may not cross. Otherwise, if there is dishonesty, corruption, manipulation of the masses, naked struggle for personal power and personal gain, there can be no socialism, no welfarism, no government, no public order, no justice, no freedom, no national unity—in short, no nation. There would be utter chaos. I believe that the permissible limits have already been crossed in this country, for which everyone, including the elite, the opposition parties and even the common citizen, must take the responsibility. But in the nature of things the persons at the top of the power pyramid must take of the responsibility.

DEADWOOD IN ADMINISTRATION

The Prime Minister must have realized by now that power—even unchallenged power—is not enough; that personal popularity and charisma are not enough; that thumping electoral victories are not enough; that legislation is not enough; that statization, mis-called nationalization, of vital economic sectors is not enough; that plans are not enough; nor all of them put together are enough. For had it been so, the country's condition would not have been what it is today. If the Prime Minister has realized all this, she must have asked herself : what is wrong then, what is missing ?

I do not know what answer, if any, she had found, but my answer—offered in order to help and not to accuse or censure—is that the wrong lies in the complete collapse of the moral authority of the country's political leadership. The Prime Minister must be very ill-informed indeed if she does not know that the common people—I am not speaking of "right reactionaries" and "left adventurists"—have come to believe that most, if not all, ministers, including chief ministers; most of their representatives from *Gram Panchayat* presidents to Members of Parliament; most, if not all officers of the government, high or low, have become corrupt—the corruption taking varied forms. Ministers of the Union Government are not exempt from this common belief, even though the common man is quite distant from them The Prime Minister's own image has become clouded, though even now the people seem to have more trust in her than in the others.

I am sure that this picture is exaggerated. Heaven knows there are still honest men and women among the ministers (including Chief Ministers), people's representatives and officers. But, the masses have a sixth sense and their perception is largely true. Besides, they have enough direct experience of the pervading corruption to generalize from. They find that they can hardly transact any business in a government, quasi-government, or even a branch bank office without greasing somebody's palm. Innumerable examples of this can be given. As far as the people are concerned, *bhrashtachar*, as Vinobaji has said, has become *shishtachar*. Apart from their own personal experience at the lower levels, the common man hears enough about high-ups, including those in Delhi, to form his own opinion.

In the minds of the urban intelligentsia—the unattached and

non-partisan larger part of it—the picture is darker still. Is it any wonder then that the moral authority of the political leadership, including that of the opposition, with rare exceptions, should have collapsed so completely ?

PARALYSIS IN ADMINISTRATION

The result of all this is a sort of paralysis in the administration as well as in the political arm of the government, namely, the party organization inclusive of leaders and workers alike There are rare exceptions, of course, but they are too few to be effective. It is natural that in such a situation even the better-conceived policies and plans of government remain on paper or are distorted and used for the personal gain of politicians and officers and the better-off sections of the population. Even relief funds, grains and goods, including children's foods, have been so misused. All welfare schemes and "crash" employment and development programmes remain either unexecuted or mal-executed, leaving comparatively little of lasting value or use. The so-called state "core" sector becomes a bottomless pit from which little is retrieved as compared with the vast amounts sunk in them. Land reforms and other similar reforms remain infructuous, and even land specially reserved for the landless is grabbed by powerful politicians and officers and their relatives, Controls fail and the black market flourishes. A parallel black money economy prospers unchecked, on which the dishonest politicians thrives and which provides the bulk of the sinews of elections, with the full knowledge and consent of the highest party leaders. Legislators defect and change parties, sometimes more than once; for a price : money or ministerial or an equivalent office. All-round indiscipline becomes the order of the day. The evils resulting from the moral collapse can be endlessly listed, but the above is illustrative enough. What is necessary is to find the remedy. I wish to make a few suggestions. These suggestions are incorporated in my two articles one entitled "Fighting Corruption" and the other "The Only Hope". I claim no originality to make these suggestions. But I believe that they will go a long way to bring the disease under control, if not cure it radically. It is reasonable to hold that once that is done, given the political will on the part of all the parties, the body-politic can be restored to health, even if not to perfect health, which in life may rarely be

possible.

In this connection, while I welcome the initiative of a group of MPs, calling themselves the Parliamentary Forum for Eradication Corruption, and their admission that there is "all-round corruption" (*Hindustan Times*, August 10), I am certain that unless competent and effective institutional procedures and authorities are established and their decisions are statutorily enforced, the well-meaning efforts of groups and individuals—even mass demonstrations and sporadic indignant action by the youth and other concerned groups—will not be able to stem the tide.

26

FACE TO FACE WITH REALITY

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

It Happened at the beginning of June last. Abruptly cancelling my tour of Uttarkhand, I had arrived post haste at Muzaffarpur with my wife and announced my decision to bury myself in a Block of that District, called Musahari, where Naxalites had been active and had committed four murders and at least one armed dacoity and served death notices on two of our prominent Sarvodaya workers.

The press and the Radio naturally dramatised the announcement and reported that I had accepted the "challenge" of the Naxalites and decided to "fight" them.

I, no doubt, have my share of human vanity, but I am not a particularly vain person. Even during my political days, when I was younger, it was not my wont to throw challenges about or "declare war" on political opponents. I have no army, not even non-violent army, to fight the Naxalites with, nor do I look upon what I am doing as a fight against anybody but as a fight *for* social and economic justice. The truth, quite contrary to what has been made out that I have undertaken my present task prayerfully and is a spirit of deep humility.

The emergence of such danger to our lives appeared me as a God-send. I had been feeling for quite sometime past that our movement was losing its fire, and we, its workers, were becoming,

*In this article sent from his village camp Jayaprakash Narayan tells the story of his mission of peace.

stale and flabby of spirit. One of the reasons for this seemed to be that our work was so blant that it involved no personal danger to us, nor demanded say great sacrifice.

In my view Naxalism is *"primarily"* a social, economic, political and administrative problem and *'only secondarily'* a law and order question.

As for the law and order aspect of Naxalism, it is my view that it should be solely the concern of the government, which alone has the authority, duty and resources to protect the lives and property of the citizens. I believe that any encouragement to organised private armed resistance to Naxalism, especially in the context of a weak government, is fraught with the danger of eventual escalation into civil war. But, while government must do its duty, let no one forget that no amount of arrests, imprisonments and shootings can put down Naxalism or any other kind of revolutionary violence, unless at the same time the remedy is applied at the roots In this latter effort, of course, the government, political parties, social and Gandhian workers can all make their significant contribution.

II

A word about the programme of work we have taken up. The programme is in two parts and has been outlined by me at the outset of my campaign at the party-leaders' meeting at Muzaffarpur. One part related to implementation of the Gramdan pledges obtained earlier in this Block and consisted in the following items :

1. Establishment of the Gram Sabha;
2. Redistribution of one-twentieth of the land covered by Gramdan;
3. Setting up of the Gram Kosh; and
4. Organisation of the Gram Shanti Sena.

We have now added a fifth item, namely preparation of the necessary papers, village-wise, to be submitted to the Gramdan Confirmation Officer for *legal* confirmation of Gramdan.

In other part was outlined thus :

1. To distribute undistributed Bhoodan lands and to correct mistakes and wrongs discovered is respect of previously distributed lands
2. To ensure that every "privileged person" has received his homestead *parcha*, and to rectify irregularities and wrongs in respect of propously distributed *parchas*.
3. To take up specific cases of injustice and operession brought to my notice and to help is their redressal.

In order to appreciate the significance of the above items of work, it is necessary to know something about the Gramdan movement as well as about agrarian relations and conditions in Bihar. But it is not possible, for reasons of space, to deal in any adequate manner with these questions here, Yet, as I continue with my story I shall try to convey some idea of these to the reader.

Musahari is one of the 40 C.D. Blocks in Muzaffarpur. It has a total area of 43,983 acres, of which 36,398 acres are cultivated. Its estimated present population (rural) it 1,18,737. Thus, the land man ratio (taking into account only the cultivated land works out at 30 cents per capita. Taking the total acreage, the ratio comes to 37 cents per capita. There are 17 village panchayats in the Block and 121 revenue villages.

As compared with many other Blocks of this District. Musahari has a relatively high percentage of agricultural labour population Whereas the average for the whole District is only 33.3, the agricultural labourers with their dependents make up 39.2 per cent of the total rural population of this Block. (The town of Muzaffarpur forms the urban part of the Musahari (Block). If we add to the number of other landless labourers who seek their livelihood in the town, the proportion of landless labourers and their dependents to the total rural population could not be less than 45 per cent. This fact, taken together with the land man ratio, accounts, among other things, for the uncommon dominance of the landowning families, the exceptionally low wages particularly of the "attached" labourers, the high degree of unemployment, the extreme poverty of the agricultural labourers, and of the general climate of discontentment. This also accounts perhaps for the general backwardness of this block, whether in education, agricultural development or in political consciousness, even though

it happens to adjoin the District town. Another remarkable fact about this area is that while the proximity to the town does not seem to have had any positive influence on it, the negative effects of it are quite visible in the form of litigation, drink, general decay of community life, etc.

I have been in this Block for over 4 months now.

Even though this is not the first time that I have taken up intensive village work, I have not buried myself in this manner before in a limited rural area for such highly intensive work for an indefinite period. This had naturally given me a unique opportunity to look closely at the reality of village life in these parts.

My first reaction on coming face to face with reality was to realise how remote and unreal were the brave pronouncements of Delhi or Patna from the actuality at the ground level! High-sounding words, grandiose plans, reforms galore. But somehow they all, or most of them manage to remain suspended somewhere up in mid-air. They hardly touch the ground—at least not here. Or touch it very lightly. In the event what meet the eye are utter poverty, misery, inequality, exploitation, backwardness, stagnation, frustration, los of hope.

It was some years ago that I had observed that if the reform laws already enacted came to be fully and truly implemented, it would amount to a minor social revolution in the countryside. I had instanced the laws concerning homesteads, share-cropping, land-ceiling, minimum wages, money-lending. Several more can be added. Recently there has been quite a bit of halaballo raised both in Delhi and Patna about implementing the existing land reforms. But, one has only to look cloeely to discover to what extent these laws continue obstinately to remain on paper, and how some of them like those relating to share cropping minimum wages, money-lending, etc., are likely to remain there, irrespective of whatever the administration may do. The benefit of these laws will not accrue to those for whom they are meant unless there is a change brought about in the people's attitude of mind and values of life, and unless the village community comes to be organised and run more democratically, so that the balance of power in the community, which tilts deeply at present to the side of the landed and moneyed interested, comes to be held evenly by all the interests in the village. This is what Gramdan-Gram Swaraj is

about.

Two illustrations should be enough to clarify what I am saying. Both illustrations are drawn from the experiences gained in carrying out the programme outlined above, and both concern landless labourers who make up the weakest section of the village community. Take the simplest piece of legislation : the privileged Persons Homestead Tenancy Act. This act was passed in January 1948 and put into force in February of the same year. Twenty-two years and six months have passed. During this long period though much concern was expressed by the Bihar Government, and numerous circulars and Government orders were issued, from time to time to the District Officers, nothing worth speaking was actually done. The only serious attempt made to implement the law was during the second President's rule in the state, the credit for which goes to the Adviser, Shri T.P. Singh. The present Government has also been making an effort in this behalf. Yet I find in Musahari that, on an average, only about 50 per cent of the so-called "privilleged persons" would be hard to imagine a more unprivileged group of persons than there landless people—have so far received their "parchas" (prescribed official forms stating the area of the homestead and granting permanent tenancy in it to the privileged person concerned). This is not all. In mans of the cases in which *parchas* have already been issued, the area recorded is pitifully small—I have seen many *parchas* in which the area entered was just one cent of land ! Mercifully, the local administration is quite co-operative in issuing *parchas* to those left out, as well as ordering re-measurement and correcting the *parchas* where necessary.

Even that does not end the story. Cases have been brought to my notice in which privileged persons had been evicted from their homesteads even after parchas had been issued to them !

Just one more example. I have referred above to the low scale of agricultural wages in this Block. My enquiries have revealed how helpless the Minimum Wages Act and Labour Officers are in this regard. Under the Act, minimum wages for different agricultural operations are fixed from time to time for every District. The present scales were fixed many years ago which have been revised recently. The revised scales are higher than the present ones, but they have not been enforced by the Government yet. But even if we take the old scales, we find that in Musahari the

current wages, particularly of the attached labourer, are, on the average, half of what are prescribed. That is bad enough, but what is worse is that the Labour Department's officers, whose duty it is to see that the wage-scales are enforced, are quite helpless in the matter. It is not their fault, however. The fault is that of the law itself, and more so, of the procedures laid down under it The Labour Officer or Inspector has no power to act *suo moto* even when he actually finds that much lower wages than those prescribed are being paid. He can act only on a complaint from a labourer. In the existing state of affairs, it is not easy for a labourer to gather sufficient courage to lodge a complaint, especially in a backward area with a surplus labour population. But even if someone dares to make a complaint, the procedure is utterly self-dafeating. The complaint will first have to be enquired into, and if found true, a case will be instituted in a Labour Court before which the complainant must appear and make a statement. The court will then proceed in the manner of courts to take its own leisurely time over it. The pity is that even though there has been a succession of Labour Ministers in Bihar professing redical social philosophies, no one has ever thought it worthwhile to look closely into this problem and amend the Act and its rules so that the law might be better enforced. It is better not to have a law than to have one which cannot be enforced.

After having said all this, I must make it clear again that while improvement in the law and its administration is necessary, and will help, that by itself will not be enough to meet the situation. For that the ultimate remedy, as pointed out earlier, is moral and social reconstruction of the village community and correction of the balance of power within it.

III

The country has expressed a good deal of concern recently over the growth of politically motivated rural violence. A part of this violence is no doubt artificially created in pursuance of a political ideology, but it would never have taken any root had not the ground been prepared for it by the persistence of poverty, unemployment and a myriad social-economic injustices. If my remark about the implementation of existing reform laws producing a mini social revolution in the countryside is true, its

converse is equally true. The failure to implement those laws for such a protracted period of time has inevitably led to the growth of rural violence that we witness. It is not the so-called Naxalites who have fathered this violence, but they who have persistently defied and defeated the laws for the past so many years—be they politicians, administrators, land-owners, money-lenders.

When such happens to be the situation, and when the institution, and processes of democracy are found to be so woefully lacking, is there any wonder that discontentment, frustration, anger, want should turn the minds of some towards violence as the only possible saviour ?

But while all this is understandable, it is relevant to ask if violence will prove to be the saviour it is promised to be ? It is not as if we were at the dawn of the first violent revolution in history that is to usher in the first day of deliverance for the "wretched of the earth". There have been quite a number of such revolutions already that have rubbed off a good deal of their shine and brought disenchantment in their train.

It must be noted that political violence can be both revolutionary and reactionary. There is no certainty that a violent revolutionary movement will always lead to a social revolution. It might very well produce a reaction and end up in a fascist dictatorship.

The central issue in all revolutions is that of power, and though they are all made in the name of the people's power, power comes invariably to be usurped by a handful of the most ruthless among the erstwhile revolutionaries. Nor can it be otherwise when power comes out of the barrel of the gun and the gun is not in the hands of the common people but in those of the organised Instruments of violence that a successful revolution always throws up the 'revolutionary" army any its auxiliaries. Whoevercontrols those instruments controls power. That is why a violent revolution has always brought forth some kind of the other of a dictatorship. And that is also why after a revolution a new privileged class of rulers and exploiters grows up in course of time to which the people at large are once again subjected.

No, violence has not proved to be the saviour that the oppressed and exploited are led to believe it is. To alter lightly Tolstoy's famous remark, the revolutionaries have done everything for the people but get off their backs !

It should not be supposed that the preceding discussion had

only the Marxist-Leninist communist, popularly known as Naxalites in view. They are by no means the only votaries of bloody revolution in the country. Among the many others the following many be listed : the C P.I., (marxist), R.S.P., S.U.C., R.C.P.I., Bolshevik Party, Forward Block (Marxist), etc. The only difference between them is about : (a) the appropriate moment for the call to be given for a mass uprising; (b) the strategy of action to be adopted in the interim period.

If one were to pick out the Naxalites for special criticism, there could be two counts on which it would have to be made : One is the method they are following. Any one acquainted with Marxism and Leninism, as propounded by the masters themselves, would agree that the methods and ideology of the Communist Party (M-L) are terrorists rather than, revolutionary. And for all their invocation of Mao's name, they are not even Maoist. They might possible be guevaraist, but no one has called Che' Guevara a Marxist, Leninist. Terrorism, which is always born out of frustration, may conceivably create a narrow revolutionary base among sections of the frustrated youth and backward and embittered tribals and the rural poor, but such elements would be too weak, even with foreign assistance, to make a truly indigenous social revolution by themselves. Terroristic violence, in fact, is more likely to provoke counterviolence from the stronger sections of society, leading eventually to some form of despotism.

The other count is there anti-nationalism. Certain forms of of nationalism may be objectionable, such as aggressive, expansionist and neo-colonialist. But Indian nationalism, certainly does not belong to that category. Chinese Han nationalism, on the other hand, particularly as expressed in the claim that any territory that at any time was a part, or under the influence of, Imperial Peking, is for ever China, is certainly a variety of not only objectionable, but dangerous, nationalism.

In spite of these fatal faults, the very impatience of the Naxalites with the existing state of affairs has as appealing quality. Moreover, their attempt to precipitate a revolution here and now has rendered at least one service in that it has aroused the social consciousness of the people in general, and prodded the powers that be, in particular, to hasten the implementation of land and other socio-economic reforms. Unfortunately, the style of politics is this country has been such that governments, though protesting

loudly their faith in peaceful methods, have opened their ears only when blasts of violence have beated against them.

One last word on this subject. It should be borne in mind that all that passes under the cloak of Naxalism Is not genuine. There is quite a mix-up of motivations behined the so-called Naxalite violence, ranging from outright criminality to personal and family feuds and enmities.

IV

If democracy is found wanting and violence offers no solution what then is the way out ? To find the way we will have to go back to Gandhiji. We will find then that Gandhiji was already aware of the futility of violence and the inherent limitations of the democratic State. While the rest of the national leaders relied solely on the power of the State to accomplish their task of nation-building Gandhiji was clear in his mind that the State could never be the sole instrument for creating the India of his dreams.

Therefore, his plan was to create alongside with the power of the State the power of the people. Accordingly, he was preparing to go back to the people at the head of a large band of revolutionary workers, to serve the people, to educate and change them, to organise them and set them up on their feet, to involve them directly in the process of social change and reconstruction. He means were going to be, as before, service, constructive work, "conversion by gentle persuasion", and when the situation required, non-violent non-co-operation or resistance.

Gandhiji did not live to carry out his plan. Fortunately, the country had Vinobaji who came forward after a time and picked up the touch that had dropped down from Gandhiji's hands. He did gather togethert he constructive workers in the Sarva Seva Sangh and sent them to the people with a mass programme of "conversion by gentle persuasion" in addition to Gandhiji's old Constructive Programme. Bhoodan was the first instalment of the former, Gramdan is the second, and following that will be Gram Swaraj. There have also been a few local satyagrahas arising out of specific situations that developed in the course of the movement. Conditions seem to be ripening in the context of our present programme that may accessitate larger-scale Satyagrahas.

The Gramdan movement is intended to generate a voluntary

process of individual and social change, and of village reconstruction and community self-government or Gram Swaraj. It involves attitudinal and value changes and changes in socio-economic as well as personal relations. It aims promoting community action for development, and at building up community, as distinct from private, resources. More explicitly, in a Gramdan village there are to be a Gram Sabha, or village Parliament, of all adults and a a Gram Fund to which everyone joining the Gramdan has to contribute a portion of their income, produce or labour depending upon whether they are cash-earners, agriculturists or labourers. Proprietors of land, in addition to the regular contribution of produce have to donate one twentieth of their land for distribution among the landless; and have also to surrender their legal title in their land to the Gram Sabha, retaining, however, the right of possession (except for the donated area), of usufruct (except for the contribution to the Gram Kosh) and of inheritance. Their right of alienation is limited by two conditions : (a) prior permision of the Gram Sabha, and (b) restriction of sale or mortgage only to Gramdan inhabitants of the village in question. The Gram Sabha represents the direct and participative democracy of the village. In the Sabha every one is equal, and its major decisions have to be made by inanimity or consensus. This is intended, among other things, to promote community solidarity and action. The Gram Fund is to be used, in part to help village destitutes. If any, and for the greater part, for development of the vllage according to the plans and decisions of the Gram Sabha.

The villages are in a deplorable state, both morally and materially. Poverty and backwardness are only too obvious. Equally obvious are the near collapse of commnnity life and the absence of any sense of belonging together. The communities are rent with feuds and factions, with the attendent litigation, tensions and moral chaos. The usual phenomena of social and economic disparities, exploitation, injustice, oppression are, needless to say, obtrusively present everywhere. It is clear that if something is not done soon to pull the villages out of this morass, they will sink deeper into it, dragging this whole country down with them, as it seems happening already to this State.

Two items of our programme seem particularly to attract the landless people : (a) our door-to-door visits in their hamlets to ensure that everyone entitled gets his home stead *parcha*, and where

needed corrections are made, is those already distributed; and (b) our taking up and ventilating the questions of wages. This is understandable because every one wants to have a secure roof over his head, and wages are the very life-breath for those whose only means of livelihood is their labour. While in the case of *parchas* our aim is to see that no homestead-dweller is left out, in the case of wages, we are merely making inquiries and talking about it at meetings and in private. Even this has produced some salutary effect and in a limited number of cases, wages have been raised. As our aim is not to divide the community and set one part against the other, but to integrate it and, by creating community consciousness and sense of mutual responsibility and by bringing together the different conflicting interests that are really interdependent into mutual confrontation in the village parliament, to set in motion a process of resolution of conflicts and problems by mutual adjustment leading for juster and better social order. Ours is not the trade union approach.

As there is intense land hunger among the landless people, our programme of redistribution of land also attract them. But, in the first place, there is not much land here to redistribute, as the land man ratio in the area show. Secondly, the one-twentieth part that we are asking for does not add up to much, so we are able to give small parcels of land to only a few out of many landless labouring families in the village. Even small parcels of 5 to 10 kathas (approximately 20 to 40 cents here) mean something in an area where the land per capita comes to only 30 cents.

Some critics say that the Gramdan movement does not go far enough. Of course, that is true, if they are measuring the distance from the ultimate goal. But what does go far enough ? I know of none that has reached there irrespective of the time taken. As for the legal method, it is not realised that, in many respects Gramdan goes farther than the law has done until now or can do in the future. It all depends upon what your goal is, it is transformation —even though national and formal in law—of individual ownership into community ownership of land; if it is establishment of a participatory village democracy; if it is inculcation of the spirit of self-reliance and co-operative endeavour among the rural people—if it is all this the law simply cannot do them. Even in the matter of redistribution of land, one-twentieth part certainly seems to be very little. But, it should be borne in mind : (a) that this applies

even to those whose holdings are below the ceiling, and would still apply even if the ceiling were drastically reduced, (b) that so far the ceiling law has not yielded, at least in this State, a single surplus cent of land for redistribution.

We have covered by now 7 out of the 17 village panchayats of this Block and 43 of the 121 revenue villages. In 14 out of the 43 villages both the conditions of Gramdan have been fulfilled and in 10 of the Gram Sabhas have been formed. In 7 of the latter villages 24 bighas 11 kathas 11 bigha makes an acre here) of land have already been distributed and 14 bighas 16 kathas are yet be distributed. This is the sum of the 1/20th parts donated by landowners joining Gramdan. In 5 out of the 7 panchayats the present position of Bhoodan lands has been fully enquired into. In these panchayats 109 bighas of land had been distributed previously to 224 donees of whoom 50 have been evicted from their holdings totalling 25 bighas. Thus, the extent of eviction is about 25 per cent, which is more or less the State average. So far 675 cases have been detected in which homestead *Parchas* had not been issued. Most of them have now been issued and the remaining are in process.

As is apparent, our progress has been rather slow. In many respects, this is a difficult area; yet we would have moved faster had the earlier stage of obtaining Gramdan pledges been properly carried out. So far we have not come across a single village where we have found the two requirements of 75 per cent of the population and 51 per cent of the land to have been fulfilled. So we have to telescope both the stages of obtaining and implementing pledges into one. That naturally takes time. And, such is the decay of personal morality that even those who had signed the pledges before, try their best to wriggle out of their commitment. Some of the excuses put up are ingenions others are plain evasion. Yet, our short experience shows, as noted earlier, that consistent friendliness and manifest concern for everybody's good, coupled with patient persuasion and education, do ultimately succeed.

While the results so far achievd are small as compared with remains to be done, there is one outcome that gives us some satisfaction. Reports received from different sources are agreed that Gramdan and Sarvodaya have come to replace Naxalism and Naxalite exploits as the main topic of conversation in the villages. To be sure, the talk is not all in our favour, much of it is hostile

nevertheless this new topic has come to occupy the fore-front in the social consciousness of the rural population here.

Before concluding, I should make clear that we are fully aware that implementation of our present programmes would certainly not mark the campletion of our work here. In fact, it would be the beginning. Gramdan will only prepare the necessary socio-psychological conditions for the direct democracy of the village to function properly. But much would remain to be done to make that democracy work.

27

TO THE DETRACTORS

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

In August 1972, I had contributed an article on the "Future of Democracy" to the *Radical Humanist*, which was widely published in the Indian press, both daily and weekly, under various titles, such as "A Hopeless Situation", "Can A Nation Survive Without a Moral Fibre ?", etc About the same time, the *Illustrated Weekly* had published an interview with me. That was represented by my usual detractors, the Pro-Soviet press of different hues, as a sustained trade by me in the "tycoon" press against the Prime Minister. All these journals, of course, displayed, as it suits their commercial as well as political interests, a loud partisanship for Smt. Indira Gandhi. The reader might think that they are her mouth-piece and her only accredited defenders. As for the tycoon press, well, if the count is taken, the Patriot-Link and Blitz variety are not so mini-tycoon a type after all. They are surely not samples of the "small newspapers and journals" so dear to the heart of the Government of India.

The *Blitz* happened at that time to state some "facts" and challenged me to deny them. The facts were garbled, and as for the insinuations and innuendoes, all I can say is that the learned editor should have been ashamed to make them. It is interesting to recall here that the *Blitz* was launched under the patronage of the "Augusters", Asoka Mehta regularly writing for the paper and Mr. Karanjia asking me for a special message every year for its annual numbers ! Be that as it may, my simple answer to my

friend, Mr. R.K. Karanjia, and so men of his generations, is that the day Jayaprakash Narayan turns a foreign stooge, there will be no patriot left in this country; if that sounds vain, I cannot help it.

A whole generation, however, has grown up for which even Mahatma Gandhi is little more than a name. Jayaprakash Narayan to them is not even a name. Blitz and similar papers are popular among a section of this new generation and they may be influenced by the continuous propaganda of misrepresentation and vilification. Therefore, without giving up my accustomed policy of never entering into controversy with such parpers, I feel I should briefly clarify certain points for the benefit of the new generation.

CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

There is no need for me to deny my association with the Congress for Cultural Freedom. I was pround, as the Honorary President of the International Congress, to be in the distinguished company of Bertrand Russell, Benedetto Croce, John Dewey, Theodor Heuss, Karl Jaspers, Salvador de Madariags, Jacques Maritain, Reinhold Niebuhr, Leopold Senghor, Ignazio Silone and others. It is difficult to imagine a more billiant constellation of names in the modern world. Russell, Croce, Dewey were indeed ornaments of civilization. Lord Russell had later resigned not because be sensed the tainted source of its funds but because of his differences with the American Committee of the Congress. None of us, perhaps, not even Nicolas Nabokov, the General Secretary of the Congress, had any hint of the Congress being in any way linked with C.I.A. funds. It was only when the highly respected and resourceful *New York Times* made the exposures that we came, like any one also, to know of the truth. It was revealed then that except for Mike Josselson and perhaps one or two others, not so high up in the Congress, no one else had known the real funding source of the American Foundations that ostensibly financed the Congress. All of us in the Congress felt cruelly deceived and let down. I immediately resigned my honorary presidentship and cut off my relations with the international organization. Even after the Congress was drastically reorganized, the name also undergoing a change, and the Ford Foundation undertook to finance it for some years, after which its grants were to taper off and the new association was to stand up on its own legs, I declined to associate

myself with the international body. I continue to be a member of the Indian Committee, because I consider the members of the Committee to be as good patriots and as honourable men as any in this country. I would consider it moral cowardice to let them down.

ASIA FOUNDATION

As for the Asia Foundation, it was functioning in this country with the full approval of the Government of India and requests for grants from it were processed through several Union Government ministries. In the case of the Gandhian Institute of Studies, grants from Asia Fundation, totalling (over a period of three years—1965 to 67) Rs. 2,10,000, half the amount being for maintenance and half for research projects, had to be cleared through three Ministries, I believe, namely, Education, External Affairs and Finance. It was only after the Foundation received a "no objection" letter from the Government of India that the grants were remitted to the Institute. How was I or the Institute's Board of Management to know something which the Government of India itself did not know ? Were we supposed to have our own intelligence service ? Moreover, the Gandhian Institute was not the only institutional in the country to have received grants from the Asia Foundation.

It is a great pity that the *Blitz* should have though it fit to malign such a dedicated organization as the Tarun Shanti Sena, which is one ray of constructive and at the same time revolutionary hope on the student front particularly and the educational front generally. It is difficult for me to make out what the learned editor means to convey except the hackneyed attempt to link it with America, this time the American Peace Corps. Let me put the relevant facts before the public.

TARUN SHANTI SENA

The Tarun Shanti Sena is really to extension of the Shanti Sena. The Shanti Sena was originally conceived by Gandhiji himself and group shape by him on different occasions, beginning in 1921, when during the non-co-operation movement, communal riots had suddenly erupted in some parts of Bombay. Gandhiji

had fasced, and mixed groups of volunteers from various religious communities were chosen and deputed to work in the riot-stricken areas. On several later occasions the idea was given further shape under his guidance, the last time by Mahadevbhai Desai during the Ahmedabad riots of 1941.

After Gandhiji's assassination, the forces of non-violence were in a state of daze and stupefaction, until Vinobaji broke the paralysing spell and took the field, almost alone to preach and work for his revolution through love. It was in the course of his Bhoodan journey through Kerala that Vinobaji revived the Shanti Sena in August 1957. Five years later, Sri Narayan Desai, desirous of inculcating the ideals of the Shanti Sena among the youth in their early years, formed the Kishor Dal for boys and girls up to the age of 14.

The Tarun Shanti Sena came out of my experiences during the Bihar famine of 1966-67. During that terrible period there was a fairly large number of young men and women, mostly university students, from almost all the Western countries—Britain, France, West Germany, Scandinavia, Canada, U.S.A., Australia—who came to do relief work in stricken Bihar. Some of the volunteers, who belonged to different organizations, affered their services to the Bihar-Relief Committee and some others like the American Peace Corps Volunteers were dovetailed to the Committee by some Government functionary in charge of them. During my tours of supervision I was deeply impressed and touched by the devotion and diligence with which the foreign volunteers, both girls and boys, in spite of the summer heat, carried on such difficult duties as digging wells and blasting rocks and sinking tubewells. In sad contrast to their hard and dedicated work was the response from, and performance, of Bihar student volunteers, though student volunteers from other states, particularly from Gujarat and Maharashtra, gave a much better account of themselves.

These experiences troubled me a great deal and I wanted to discover some way of utilizing our college and university youth for "tasks of national reconstruction as I termed it. At the same time I was anxious to wed national reconstruction with the ideal of a non-violent social order. Thus, was the Tarun Shanti Sena (Youth Peace Corps in English) born. The Akhil Bharat Shanti Sena Mandal and the Sarva Seva Sangh endorsed my idea and accepted the Tarun Shanti Sena as a wing of the Shanti Sena. The Kishor

Dal was merged with the Tarun Shanti Sena. That was in 1967, two years before the *Blitz* report about my meeting with "Jack" of the American Peace Corps. I do not remember the lunch, though it might well have taken place I had already come in touch, during the famine days, with the American Peace Corps, as I have said above, which was functioning openly in the country with the Government of India's permission. I remember being invited to address a new groups of the Corps volunteers at the Palace Hotel in Patna. There was nothing secret and sinister about that or the lunch about which my memory is not certain. It was perhaps at that time that the proposal of a joint project of rural development with the Tarun Shanti Sena was made to me. The very fact, as reported in *Blitz*, that I perferred a joint project not only with the American Peace Corps but also with the other foreign volunteer organizations—there were, and I believe still are, several of them in the country, with whom I had worked during 1966-67—suggests that I had no particular affinity with the American Peace Corps.

Here, before I conclude this part of the story, I should like once again to pay my unqualified tribute to the hundreds of young men and young women, all of them from the West, for their heroic labour of love during the great famine That there might have been among them some secret agents of their governments was the concern of those in our embassies and the External Affairs Ministry who granted them visas and allowed them to work in this conutry. I do not see why I or my Sarvodaya colleagues should be expected to work as spies and succeed where the intelligence department of the Government of India fail.

MEANS OF SUPPORT

The question how to maintain myself has often been privately raised and insinuation made according to the political complexion of the person concerned. I have bad the unique distinction of being made the target of attack from different sides in turn. I have been bitterly attacked by the R.S.S. for some time I cannot forget the occasion when, on the eve of our departure on a goodwill mission to West Pakistan (as it then was) my wife and I Mr. and Mrs. J.J. Singh (Mr. Singh was a member of the mission) were besieged by menacing R.S.S. volunteers and their supporters at the Town Hall (I believe it was) in Old Delhi where for nearly two

hours they kept up the refrain "Ghaddar ko nahin sunenge" (we will not hear the traitor) "Ghaddar ko phansi do" (hang the traitor). There it was that a young man shouted, as I was entering the Hall, "Just tell us how you maintain yourself" and then "Pakistan ka pitthoo" (Pakistani stooge). Apparently, I was supposed to be in the pay of Pakistan.

I have been denouneed for my views on Kashmir and friendship with Sheikh Abdullan, not only by Jan Sangh leaders, but by Congressmen too. My work in Nagaland too has come in for attack. One Union Cabinet Minister had quipped once in some such words as : "From Bhoodan, Jayaprakash Narayan is advancing towards Kashmir Dan, Nagaland Dan, etc. Eventually he will end up with Bharat Dan." I have been attacked and praised in turn by Muslim leaders. The CPI and its numerous fronts, fellow-travellers, infiltrators, have had their knife in me most of the time since my final break with them during the "People's War" days. These quarters have insinuated from time to time my access, in some manner or other, to American money.

CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY

The simple truth of the matter is that I have been supporting myself and my wife in the same manner in which Congressmen supported themselves during the freedom movement, i.e., with the help of friends and organizations. In my case, I started my political career in 1930 as Secretary of the Labour Department of the AICC. My salary was Rs. 150 per month. From then on until the August revolution broke out, the times were hard for both of us. Fortunately, we were both in prison for long periods, and I was also under-ground for quite some time in 1932-33 and 1943-44. Earlier, when my father had a stroke and was forced to retire from government service and the family was faced with an economic crisis, I served for some months, on Gandhiji's recommendation, as private secretary to Sri Ghanshyamdas Birla. After the Gandhi-Irwin agreement. I went back to the AICC. Birlaji continued to pay my salary until I went under-ground again in Bombay.

In 1934, the first steps towards the formation of the Congress Socialist Party were taken at the time of the Patna AICC meeting; and, as organizing secretary, at first, and later as General Secretary,

the main burden of running the organization fell on my shoulders. Those were really hard times for us economically. I did not draw any salary from the Party, but as I often lived in the Party office and as my III or Inter class travelling expenses were met by the Party, my expenses did not amount to much. My wife lived most of the time with Gandhiji, During this period I was sometimes helped by Gandhiji Jawaharlalji and Jamnalal Bajaj, Sri Shiva Prasad Gupta, and occasionally by Birlaji. In Varanasi I lived with Sriprakasaji and Shiva Prasadji for fairly long periods which took care of my board and lodging.

It was only after the August revolution, when I became better known, that more friends came forward to help us. After Gandhiji's assassination my wife came to live with me permanently. Both my parents were dead by then and my younger brother was in service. So there were only the two of us and as we lived modestly on Bihar middle class standards and had no sons to educate nor daughters to marry, our expenses did not come to much. When my dear friend, Professor Gyan Chand, retired from Patna College as Professor and Head of Department of Economics, he gave me most of his furniture, which still forms the major part of the furniture in our flat. It was only recently that I had some new furniture made for my office and little library. When I happened to receive the Magsaysay Award I deposited the amount in a Calcutta firm which after income tax deduction, fetches me around Rs. 400 a month. (I have willed the proceeds of the deposit after my death to be distributed equally between the Mahila Charkha Samiti and the Kamala Nehru Shishu Vihar, both institutions founded by my wife.) The interest from the deposit and some additional help from friends have kept us going. Hardly has any doctor in India charged fees from me or my wife for medical help. Every winter solicitous friends have asked us if we needed any warm clothes, so most of our winter clothes are gifts from kind friends. Whenever we went abroad, my late wife and I, the passage money was always raised by our friends and sometimes our expenses abroad were met by sponsoring organizations such as the Religious Society of Friends, the Socialist Union (now defunct) of Britain and just once by the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The last time when we went on a world tour for Bangladesh, our expenses abroad were also paid for by a friend in India, through we returned with most of the foreign exchange

unspent, as almost everywhere we were guests, thanks to advice from the Prime Minister, of our Ambassadors and High Commissioners. My health and age no longer allow me to travell III class, though some years back I did experiment twice with a III sleeper, but had to give it up. Now I travel mostly I class or by air and on very rare occasions during summer by A.C. Some have wondered privately who finances this travelling. Sometimes it is the inviting organization or institution, at other times my friends.

SMALL LANDED PROPERTY

Lastly, I have inherited a small landed property in my home village in the Ballia district of U.P. More than half of my lands I have given away to the landless families in my village and to a Gandhi Ghar, a Girls' School, a veterinary centre and two little temples. The rest of the land, with tube-wells constructed with loans from the U.P. Government, yields enough for the upkeep of my household in the village and for supplying me with enough wheat and pulses for a year for my Patna household. The rice for the Patna household comes from a friend from his land in Bhagalpur. This, in brief, is the story of how I manage to maintain myself.

It is with some reluctance that I have written the above, because one does not like to talk about oneself. But, the frequent sniping by my habitual detractors and their insinuations and innuendoes have compelled me to indulge in this unpalatable exercise for the benefit, as I have said above, of the post-independence generation.

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THE LAND GRABBERS

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Louis Fischer : "What would happen in a free India," (I asked.) "What is your programme for the improvement of the lot of the peasantry ?"

Gandhi : "The peasants would take the land," (he replied.) "We would not have to tell them to take it. They would take it."

Louis Fischer : "Would the landlords be compensated ?" (I asked).

Gandhi : "No" (he said.) "That would be fiscally impossible. You see," (he smiled), "our gratitude to our millionaire friends does not prevent us from saying such things. The village would become a self-governing unit living its own life"*

That was the vision of the 20th Century Apostle of non-violence. His vision did not come true in this as in so many other respects. Neither the peasants took the land nor did any one tell them to do so. Had anyone tried to do so he would have been blocked by Nehru's vision of democratic law and order and state socialism. The country's destiny was ruled for nearly 18 years by that vision; and except for a brief interregnum of 18 months which was dominated by two tremendous national concerns-spiritual

* *Louis Fischer* : *A Week with Gandhi*, International Book House Ltd., Bombay, 1944, page 43.

recovery from the national humiliation inflicted by the Chinese and the Pakistan war—the country is still being ruled by that same vision.

LAND-GRABBING BY BIG LANDLORDS

What has happened during these 23 years to the land? Millions of small farmers, in the absence of resources-cheap and timely credit, irrigation, etc.—and in view of recurring droughts, scarcities, floods, fluctuating prices, adverse market mechanisms, usurious interests, etc. have been forced to sell their lands at buyers' prices to re-pay arrears of rent, loans and other dues. Under-tenants and share-croppers, in the absence of even a chit to establish their possession, have been systematically evicted. Countless others, from the weaker sections of the community, have been eased out of their holdings, including home-steads simply by force or devious frauds. Neither law nor order has come to their help. Legal procedures being what they are, the poor seldom succeed in securing justice. And the guardians of order fall an easy prey to the considerations that only the stronger sections of the community can offer. Thus, lands have been taken but not by those of whom Fischer and Gandhi were thinking but by those from whom Gandhi thought they would be taken.

This is only a part of the picture. In those areas of the country, such as Bihar, where, owing to the zamindari system, the Government does not yet have up-to-date and reliable land records, hundreds of thousands of acres of "vested" lands—i.e., uncultivated and unsettled lands previously owned by zamindars and now vested in the Government—have been just grabbed by the stronger sections of the rural society. In Bihar, the situation is so bad that the Government itself does not know how much vested land it has and what is the extent of encroachment upon it. Government policy and orders have also been such that encroachment, though stealthy and illegal, has been given the appearance of legality. The Administration has been so remiss and so permissive in this matter, that should the Government make a serious attempt to recover its lands, in most cases it will have to go to court where the fradulent are more likely to win than not. Even where Government lands have been settled with landless persons, the lands have been grabbed in one way or another by the stronger

people in the village.

These traditional and seasoned land-grabbers are respectable people, wielding influence in society, in politics, in Government and elsewhere.

There is yet another category of land-grabbers. This is made up of those gentlemen whose land holdings are in excess of the ceiling—such as it is—and who have cheated the law by making *benami* and fictitious settlements. It is a matter of shame that not an acre of land has so far been redistributed to a landless person as a result of the working of the ceiling law. And the State Secretariat had been issuing circulars galore for the past several years, instructing District officers to track down excess land and distribute it to the landless.

It is in this background that the movement of the CPI, the SSP and the PSP to mobilise landless people for occupying vested lands and lands under benami and fictitious settlement must be viewed. Questions of morality, of law and order, of the democratic way of life and similar other questions have been raised. There were no such questions raised, no hue and cry about land grabbers, no democracy-in-danger slogans when the stronger elements the villages illegally and stealthily stole hundreds of thousands of acres which they had no right whatever. If any thing, the politicians who enacted the reforms and the officers, whose duty it was to implement them, connived at the loot and where possible participated in it themselves.

GOVERNMENT'S DUTY

Therefore, I have no sympathy for those who are making all this halabaloo. I look at the matter differently. It appears to me that what the communists and the socialists are doing or proposing to do is an attempt to rectify a great wrong by peoples' action which too, as long as it is open and peaceful and conducted in the right manner, is a part of the democratic way of life. Thus looked at the parties' land movement may also be considered to be so much assistance rendered to the Government in retrieving its property and dispensing justice to those who have been wronged This movement might turn out to be an effective aid to Government for the implementation of its land politics. Therefore, instead of treating it as a law and order question the Government

should step in as a mediator, look into the justice or injustice of every case and bring about an amicable settlement between the landlord and the squatters. Where an action may be unjustified, the Government must be firm and not give in to political pressure or horse-trading. But in all cases of justified action the Government must back the squatters, put pressure on the landlords and persuade them to relinquish what does not rightfully belong to them, irrespective of the fradulent papers witnesses they might produce.

The land thus secured in a village should be distributed in the general assembly of the village—gram sabha-and with the participation and consensus of the landless persons of the village. In the absence of consensus among them, the distribution should be made by drawing lots from amongst the more deserving persons.

ADVICE TO POLITICAL PARTIES

A few words to the political parties concerned. I know it would be unrealistic to expect them to act in disregard of their electoral prospects. To win votes must be the main concern of political parties. But as in everything else, there has to be limit here too. If vote-catching were to be placed above the peoples ? or the nation's interest temporary political gain might become permanant national loss. Therefore, my first advice to the parties is to keep politicking—whether coalition politicking or opposition politicking—out of their "land for the landless', movement. If they did that, there should be no difficulty in their being able to co-ordinate their efforts and conduct a joint campaign. In West Bengal we saw the ugly result of parties—all belonging to the United Front—fighting not for land for the people but for the votes of the peoples. Hundreds of political workers killed one another, leading ultimately to the break-up of the Front itself.

My second advice is that the parties should first make as thorough an investigation as possible to discover sizeable areas of Government lands. Illegall occupied by landlords as well as of *benami* lands. If the parties are in close touch with villages, they should have no difficulty in ascertaining the truth, for there is hardly anything that remains a secret in the village community. No action should be taken in cases where the facts are not known or are doubtful or disputed.

My third advice to the parties is that before launching an action they should give a chance to the landlords in question to correct the wrongs done by them. Pariy leaders should meet the landlords, reason with them, appeal to them and otherwise try to persuade them to give up their unjustly occupidd lands. It is only when the persuasion fails that the people's action should be launched, but only after giving due notice to the landlords and the administration. It will also be advisable before taking action to inform and educate public opinion and enlist the approval of the small and big landlords of the locality who may not be guilty of having encroached upon Government lands or of cheating the land reforms, or who may have been persuaded to give up what they might have wrongfully occupied.

My last advice to the parties is that in distributing lands, they should not try to favour their supporters, for not only injustic might be done thereby but also the Bengal example of incipient civil war might be repeated. As I said above, the distribution should be carried out in a general assembly of the village, i.e., a Gram Sabha, especially called for the purpose, and with the participation and consent of the landless persons in the village. In case of disagreement among the latter, the issue should be settled by drawing lots. The decisions thus reached should thereafter be formalised by the administration, and the necessary papers issued to the new settlers.

FACE VIOLENCE WITH NON-VIOLENCE

That the whole process should be peacefully conducted is a requirement that, to my mind, is so fundamental that I have not thought it necessary to include it in the advices above. The movement loses all validity as soon as the parties or the landless people indulge in violence. There might be violence from the side of the landlords or the administration. But, the parties and the people concerned must face that violence with order and discipline. Nor can the right to use violence in self-defence be invoked in a *satyagraha* of this kind.

WARNING TO CPI

In this context it is rather disturbing to learn that the CPI has

been advising the people to come to its meetings and processions not only with *lathis* but also with *bhalas, barchhas*, swords, etc. These weapons, it seems, are carried even by those who are led by it to occupy the lands. This kind of action is an open invitation to violence, and cannot be described as a democratic people's movement. It aiso seems rather strange that a party which is in alliance with the ruling party in Bihar should indulge in such action. It would be a bad day for this State and this country if democratic rights are used to undermine democracy in this fashion. The CPI will forfeit the public support if it persists in such conduct.

MY INVOLVEMENT IN GRAMDAN

If the parties heed the advice, and adhere to the conditions given above, I have no hesitation in supporting their movement. There can be no question, however, of my participation in it, or my taking a leading part in it as some have privately suggested, because I myself am deeply involved in a movement that goes much beyond distribution of land and popularisation of parties. It is a movement that, besides distributing land, aims : (a) at reorganising and strengthening the village communities so that they become self-reliant, participatory democracies, (b) at transforming individual ownership of land into community ownership and (c) at introducing mutual sharing of income, produce and labour so as to integrate the community and also enable it to build its own resources for self-development. Unless the village communities are rebuilt in this manner as self-governing, mutually co-operative, self-reliant bodies, the weaker sections are bound to continue to suffer and be insecure. If the existing imbalance of power in the community continues, land may be distributed today and be taken away tomorrow. It may be the same with other benefits bestowed upon the weak. The imbalance can be corrected only in a "shared" community through the working of the participatory democracy of the Gram Sabha. The remedy at that primary community level cannot be class consciousness and class struggle. Caste and other loyalties, including party loyalties, cut across class loyalties and reduce them to impotence In a divided community, at war within itself, the weak are bound to be the losers. It is only in an integrated community that all sections stand to gain and

the weaker ones can hope to press forward through community action.

APPEAL FOR GRAM SWARAJ MOVEMENT

The Gram Swaraj movement was confined until recently to taking gramdan pledges from the villages. Having obtained pledges from 80 per cent of the villages in the State, we are now engaged in getting the pledges implemented. I consider this work of much greater importance than the parties' movement for land. I must conclude by saying that it is a matter of great regret to me that even the partics believing in peaceful social change have not given to this gram Swaraj movement to co-operation it deserves.

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CLEAN ELECTIONS : NOT WITH DIRTY MONEY

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Collection of party funds, specially for elections, is perhaps the largest source of political and other fields of corruption. One hears of fantastic amounts running into tens of crores collected by certain Ministers of the Union Cabinet and placed at the disposal of the Prime Minister. These amounts are not entered into the Congress party's open account books, nor are ever audited; no one knows, except for a very few, how much is collected, what part of it is pocketed by the Ministers concerned, nor how the moneys are spent. These funds are used mainly for Parliamentary and State elections, at which the dependable supporters of the leadership, particularly of those among it whether at the Centre or in the States, who happen to have command over the vast funds, are specially favoured. These funds are also used for "managing" party members, buying up defectors, and toppling not only Opposition Ministries but also Congress Ministries in the course of party in-fighting.

The way these funds are collected carry the corruption virus from the political into several other fields, such as : (a) business; encouraging dishonest practices, black money earnings and accumulations, compelling even honest business firms to turn dishonest by having to raise unaccounted funds for the ruling party through their dealers, agents, contractors, bogus souvenir advertisements, etc; (b) the bureaucracy, impairing vitally its authority, impartiality,

dedication to duty and efficiency.

APPETITE FOR VAST FUNDS

It is also this insatiable appetite of the ruling party for vast funds, which can come out only of black money, that is responsible, on the one hand, for the plethora of controls and other similar impedimants to production, distribution and a price regulation and, on the other, for their failure. The result is a disastrous for the national economy.

I should add that while no party is above collecting its funds in black money, sometimes more by compulsion of circumstances than by choice, the ruling party alone is in the position to take the lion's share. The opposition parties, even if they use cleaner methods, are reluctant to disclose the sources of their funds for fear that the ruling party will somehow wreak vengeance on their donors.

Vast sums spent over elections produce two serious consequences : (a) the voters themselves are corrupted and, what is more serious, disillusioned with the democratic process; (b) the opposition parties, despairing of ever being able to match the unlimited funds of the Congress, are driven to the conclusion that the ruling party cannot be displaced through elections, and therefore, they turn to protests, gheraos, *bandhs* and violence. Indian democracy, already under attack from so many sides, has a thin chance of survival under these conditions.

It is a welcome sign that top Congress leaders are aware of this evil. Dr. Karan Singh is reported to have said at a meeting of the Parliamentary Forum for Eradication of Corruption that "elections were becoming so costly that they could be fought only with black money" (*Hindustan Times*, August 10, 1973). The *Commerce* (Bombay, July 21, 1973) reports that Mr. C. Subramaniam "courageously confessed before the first convention of the National Students Union of India that black money and foreign money had poured into the coffers of all political parties to help them fight the elections. Evesy general election was becoming incredibly costly. Only a rich person or a powerful political party can finance the elections. In this situation, Mr. Subramaniam said every candidate started his election campaign with perjury and ended it with double accounts. He was of the view that the corrupt

electoral system was the chief source of the instability of the political apparatus in the States. According to him, the political system was becoming more corrupt, immoral, most indisciplined and devoid of character. Mr. Subramaniam called upon the students to fight such corrupt practices. If a check was not placed on such widespread political immorality, the society was bound to meet with a disaster."

Mr. Subramaniam has used strong language, but his appeal to the students to check the evil only exposes his helplessness, which is not understandable. He should know that the students can do precious little in this matter. It is for Mr. Subramaniam, Dr. Karan Singh and other leaders who feel alike to take up this matter boldly in the Cabinet and the Congress Working Committee and if necessary stake their careers on this issue. The disease must be tackled at the source. In fact it is for the Prime Minister herself to make up her mind about it. She cannot be unware of the devastating effect that this manner of raising funds is having on the moral position of the Congress party, on political morality in general as also on the bureaucracy on private business, the electorate and on the nation as a whole. Indiraji is capable of extraordinary courage at times. And if she realizes *the emptiness of electoral victories and the evil of depending on black money*, she must put her foot down firmly and stop the practice forthwith and then deal firmly with any one, no matter how high up, who disregards her decision. It would be far better for her and her party if she appealed to the people at large and asked her vast party organization to make mass collections. Business firms may also be asked to contribute, but only through cheques. A crore of rupees collected in this manner would be worth more than a hundred crores of black money. The image of the Congress would improve and its socialist credentials, which are at a great discount now, will acquire some credibility. It will also tone up the bureaucracy and pave the way for dealing convincingly not only with the black money already accumulated but also with the continuous flow of black incomes.

FOREIGN MONEY

Mr. Subramaniam has mentioned foreign money. There can be no doubt that the super powers, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., who between them want to dominate the rest of the world, no

matter how subtly and unobtrusively, must be spending millions of rupees in this country for all manner of purposes. The lesser powers like China and others must also be active in their own ways Between the two super powers, the U.S.S.R. has the added advantage of having an ideology, which is still considered revolutionary by some people who have not grown up beyond the '30s, as well as that of a stable and dependable political base in the C.P.I. For some reason while Congressmen, including the Prime Minister and the Congress President, have talked often about the C.I.A., they do not mention the Russian K.G.B. I am sure the Indo-Soviet Treaty does not bar anyone, even the Government of India from talking about it. Another, even more striking fact is that Indian Intelligence, all branches of which are in the hands of the Prime Minister, has not been able to unearth the sources and recipients of foreign money and take any steps to stop the mischief. At least nothing is made known to the public. In this situation I wonder what purpose all this talk about foreign money serves, except to malign certain Opposition parties without ever producing any proof. (Mr. Subramaniam, of course, did not malign any opposition party but put the blame on all parties.) If it is not in the public interest to take the public into confidence, it is better to keep quiet about it than to indulge in insinuations time and again.

Even if the Prime Minister and the Congress High Command think it fit to heed my friendly advice, which I realize is expecting a lot, the question of the cost of elections will still remain to be tackled seriously. For the past several years a number of eminent persons from President Rajendra Prasad downwards have spoken of the need to bring down election costs to reasonable levels, at least to the ceiling fixed by law, so that money does not play such a large, and at times decisive, part in determining the shape of our legislatures and governments. To this end, a number of suggestions have also been put forward from time to time. The Chief Election Commissioner and the Joint Committee on Amendments to Election Law have also grappled, if I am not mistaken with the question and made certain recommendations. One of the more radical suggestions made by some leaders, including Dr. Faridi of the Muslim Majlis, with which I myself have been in sympathy, is the adoption of the combined system, current in West Germany, of voting at the same time for individual candidates and for the political parties in the field. It has also been suggested that the

Government itself, as in West Germany, the U.K. and some other countries, should meet a part of the candidates' election expenses on specified items.

REDUCE COST OF ELECTIONS

In view of the importance of the question, particularly in the context of much talked-of socialist ideals, it seems to me that the *Government should set up a Commission, including leaders of all parties recognized by the Chief Election Commissioner as national parties* as well as a few distinguished political scientists, to make recommendations based on a general consensus. The Government of India should accept and implement them in toto. In the absence of a consensus, the Government should formulate its own proposals based on the Commission's report and place them before Parliament for as speedy a disposal as possible.

EVIL OF DEFECTIONS

Political defections as witnessed in the past few years, particularly since 1967, have been another great source of political corruption. So much has been written on the subject that there is no need to dilate upon it here. I have only two observations to make. One concerns the delay, as in the other cases mentioned above, in implementing the recommendations of the Committee appointed by the Government pursuant to a resolution of the Lok Sabha, dated December 8, 1967, "to conside the problem of legislators changing their allegiance from one party to another and the frequent crossing of the floor in all its aspects and make recommendations in this regard". Mr, Y.B. Chavan, the then Home Minister, was its chairman and it was an all-party committee, Pandit Hridaya Nath Kunzru and myself being the only non-party members. After my sad experience about my report on the Welfare of Weaker Sections which just got shelved somewhere in the Union Secretariat. I had decided not to serve on any Government committee in the future. But when Mr. Chavan requested me to join the anti-defection committee, I gladly agreed because I was deeply worried about the ruinous effect of the new evil on our party system, the stability of governments, the character of the people's representatives and the quality and substance of our democracy.

It is true that the Committee's recommendations did not go for enough, yet I am sure if its moderate proposals had been accepted, and the required law enacted, it would have quite a dampening effect on likely turncoats and the defection epidemic would have been considerably checked.

As for the Committee's recommendations not being radical enough, the fault lay mostly with the Congress itself and to some extent with such Opposition leaders as had somehow discerned at that time a process of what they termed "polarization" of politics in operation. The Lawyers' sub-committee set up by the Defection Committee had recommended a drastic remedy, namely that those defecting should lose their seats in the legislatures concerned and go back to their constituents to seek a fresh vote. As the official records will show, Mr. Ramamurthy of the C.P.I. (M) and I were the only members of the Committee who made similar suggestions, but the Congress was not prepared to go so far. Had the Congress also supported our view, I have no doubt that several other parties would have fallen in line, and there would have been, if not a general consensus, at least a large majority in its favour. The Congress took so conservative a line in fact that its representatives were not prepared to accept even the modest suggestions, which too had a large backing. for limiting the size of Ministries to 10 per cent of the membership of unicameral legislatures, and 11 per cent of the bicameral legislatures. Mr. Chavan's great difficult then appeared to be that the Union Council of Ministers itself had more than 11 per cent of the combined strength of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha. As for those who were dreaming of polarization of politics and were therefore, anxious not to put impediments to the passage of legislators from one side to the other, I pleaded in vain that the process at work to my mind was not polarization, but just its opposite, namely fragmentation. Later events proved this diagnosis to be correct, which could have been checked to some extent even if the limited recommendation of the Chavan Committee had been implemented expeditiously.

IMMORALITY AND DEGRADATION

In the event the country witnessed the most shameful spectacle of political immorality and degradation. Party labels and ideologies lost all meaning and a brisk market flourished in which

legislators were sold and bought as cattle. Money or ministership were the main baits and the highest bidder ultimately won. During the coalition government days in the States between 1967 and 1972, the Opposition parties, which were the ruling parties then, played the game which as much gusto as the Congress had ever displayed. After the Congress split in 1969 and the masterly strokes played by Indiraji, which put her on top and clearly foretold of a new high tide in her fortunes, the trend was reversed and all self-seekers, irrespective of party loyalties or ideologies, if any, rushed to get on her band-wagon. Money, of course, was available for everyone, but ministries were limited. However, a safe seat in the legislature and promise of election expenses were more than enough for most of such politicians. After Indiraji's astounding victory in the Lok Sabha elections, there was a veritable stampede, particularly in the unstable States, where only four years earlier the Congress sun (it was the undivided Congress then) the seemed to have set for ever, to get into the new Congress. No wonder the State elections of 1972, marked a remarkable come-back for the new Congress.

The harm done by these shoddy goings-on to political ethics, to the credibility of political parties and their slogans, the validity of the party system and, most important, to Indian democracy itself was incalculable. Again, I cannot help feeling that if a law, or a constitutional amendment, if it was considered legally necessary, had been passed incorporating even the limited recommendations of the Chavan Committee, much of the political degradation could have been prevented. I also cannot help feeling that the new Congress, after the split, was anxious to reap the utmost benefit from political turn-coatism and therefore, was is no hurry to put any obstacles in the way of defection. This was political polarization with a vengeance, but of a meaningless kind because it brought together many who were not motivated by political affinity but by naked self-interest.

ANTI-DEFECTION BILL

Thus, it was only after the Congress had reaped a rich harvest that it thought it opportune to introduce the anti-defection. Bill on May 16, 1973 in the Lok Sabha, i.e., after over 4 years and 4 months of the Chavan Committee's report which was submitted on

January 7, 1969.

However, belated as this Bill is, it is to be welcomed as a step in the right direction. I am very pleased that the Bill requires a defector to resign his seat in the legislature and seek a fresh mandate from his constituents. That is a grest advance, ever the recommendation of the Chavan Committee. At the same time the Bill suffers from some serious defects, owing to imprecise definition of defection in one respect, and an exaggerated and mischievous definition in another.

It seems that the Congress party has taken into account only its own experience and its own interests. According to Clause (2) of the 32nd Constitution Amendment Bill, "A person shall be disqualified for Continuing as a member of either House of Parliament—(A) If he, having been elected as such member, voluntarily gives up his membership of the political party by which he was set up as a candidate in such election or of which he became a member after such election." If the last words "such election" will mean in law an election in which he was set up by a political party, he should, of coure, be disqualified to continue as a member, but if the words can also be construed to mean an election in which he stood as an independent candidate, his joining any party after the election cannot be considered an offence and no disqualification should apply to him. The Bill should take care to make this quite clear.

Clause (3) of the Bill states : "Notwithstanding anything in Clause (2), a member of either House of Parliament shall not be disqualified under sub-clause (A) of Clause (2) on the ground that he has voluntary given up his membership of any political party, if he has given up his membership of such political party by reason of a split therein." It is here that the definition of defection is imprecise and incomplete. The Congress party having itself gone through the experience of a split recently, that contingency is well taken into account. But what will happen : (a) when two or more parties represented in the legislature merge together to form a new party with a new name, or (b) when one or more parties merge into an existing party, under whose name the merged party continues to function, or (c) when a party expels a member and he is admitted into another party ? All these contingencies are common in our political life and the Bill must take them into consideration.

MOST OBJECTIONABLE FEATURE

But to my mind the most objectionable part of this Bill is Clause (2)(B) which states : "If he votes or abstains from voting in such House contrary to any direction issued by such political party or by any person or authority authorized by it in this behalf without obtaining prior permission of such party person or authority."

Mere non-compliance with a party whip can never be considered to be political defection because such a member has neither changed sides nor crossed the floor; he continues to remain a member of his party A member of a legislature under the party system, is certainly expected to be loyal to his party, but he has also other and higher loyalties, the highest being loyalty to his conscience. He has also a loyalty to his constituents, and to the nation and if he is a person of a wider vision, also to the world community. Ordinarily, a member of a party is expected to follow the directions of the party, but at times he might find himself unable to do so on account of his other loyalties. Therefore, non-compliance with a party whip can never be considered sufficient for his being compelled to resign his seat. That will only establish party tyranny and mar the functioning of democracy. Disobedience of a party's directive is properly an internal matter of party discipline and should be considered as such. It has no place whatever in the Constitution of India.

Finally, it is not clear why the Bill adds a new provision to Article 103 of the Constitution, which reads : "Provided that the President shall not entertain any question as to whether a member of either House or Parliament has become subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in Clause (2) of Article 102 unless the question has been referred for his decision by the political party or any person or authority authorized by it in this behalf." In the first place, it is not clear why Article 103 of the Constitution should require the President in consultation with the Election Commission, to decide such a matter. One should have thought that it came within the jurisdiction of the courts. In the second place, it seems strange that unless a defector's party refers his case to the President. He should be safe from the consequences of his immoral political conduct. Except for these blemishes, some of them quite serious, I welcome this belated Bill and hope it will

soon be made law, with it faults appropriately corrected.

CITIZEN'S RESPONSIBILITY

In conclusion, let me emphasize for all I am worth that all these institutional and legal remedies—and other that may be thought of—would be of little avail *if the will to reform were wanting in the political (including the opposition) and bureaucratic elite of the country.* Let every citizen, who realizes the paramount importance of a moral regeneration of our politics, lend a helping hand in whatever way possible to this process. Only then will he earn the right, and be able to find the way, to take the initiative in his own hands and act massively to undo the present mischief and usher in a new era of moral and material revolution. I for one cannot see the way yet because I have not done enough myself in this direction, and also because I have still hope that our leaders whether of the Left, Right or Centre, will correct themselves.

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HOW TO CHECK THE CANKER OF CORRUPTION

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

The Prime Minister must have realized by now that power even unchallenged power—is not enough; that personal popularity and charisma are not enough; that thumping electoral victories are not enough; that legislation is not enough; that *statization*, mis-called nationalization of vital economic sectors is not enough; that plans are not enough; nor all of them put together are enough. For had it been so, the country's condition would not have been what it is today. If the Prime Minister has realized all this she must have asked herself : what is wrong then, what is missing ?

I do not know what answer, if any, she has found, but my answer—offered in order to help and not to accuse or censure—is that the wrong lies in the *complete collapse of the moral authority of the country's political leadership.* The Prime Minister must be very ill-informed indeed if she does not know that the *common people*—I am not speaking of "right reactionaries" and "left adventurists" have come to believe that most, if not all, ministers, including chief ministers; most of their representatives from Gram Panchayat presidents to Members of Parliament; most, if not all, officers of the government, high or low, have become corrupt—the corruption taking varied forms. Ministers of the Union Government are not exempt from this common belief even though the common man is quite distant from them. The Prime Minister's own image has become clouded, through even now the people seem to have more

trust in her than in the others.

I am sure that this picture is exaggerated. Heaven knows there are still honest men and women among the ministers (including Chief Ministers), people's representatives and officer. But, the masses have a sixth sense and their perception is largely true. Besides, they have enough direct experience of the pervading corruption to generalization. They find that they can hardly transact any business in a Government, quasi-government, or even a branch bank office without greasing somebody's plam. Innumerable examples of this can be given. As far as the people are concerned *bhrashtachar*, as *Vinobaji* has said, has become *shishtachar*. Apart from his own personal experience at the lower levels, the common man hears enough about high-ups including those in Delhi, to form his own opinion.

In the minds of the urban intelligentsia—the unattached and non-partisan larger part of it—the picture is darker still. Is it any wonder then that the moral authority of the political leadership, including that the Opposition with rare exceptions, should have collapsed so completely ?

PARALYSIS IN ADMIMISTRATION

The result of all this is a sort of paralysis in the administration as well as in the political arm of the government, namely, the party organisation inclusive of leaders and workers alike. There are rare exceptions, of course, but they are too few to be effective. It is natural that in such a situation even the better-conceived policies and plans of government remain on paper or are distorted and used for the personal gain of politicians and officers and the better-off sections of the population. Even relief funds, grains and foods, including children's foods, have been so misused, All welfare schemes and "crash" employment and development programmes remain either unexecuted or mal-executed, leaving comparatively little of lasting value or use. The so-called state "core" sector becomes a bottomless pit from which little is retrieved as compared with the vast amounts sunk in them. Land reforms and other similar reforms remain infructuous, and even land specially reserved for the landless is grabbed by powerful politicians and officers and their relatives. Controls fail and the black market flourishes. A parallel black money economy prospers unchecked, on which the

dishonest politician thrives and which provides the bulk of the sinews of elections, with the full knowledge and consent of the highest party leaders. Legislators defect and change parties, sometimes more than once, for a price : money or ministerial or an equivalent office. All-round indiscipline becomes the order of the day. The evils resulting from the moral collapse can be endlessly listed, but the above is illustrative enough. What is necessary is to find the remedy. Below are a few suggestions, for which I claim no originality, but which I believe will go a long way to bring the disease under control, if not cure it radically. It is reasonable to hold that once that is done, given the political will on the part of all the parties, the body politic can be restored to health, even if not to perfect health, which in life may rarely be possible.

In this connection, while I welcome the initiative of a group of M.Ps , calling themselves the Parliamentary Forum for Eradication of Corruption, and their admission that there is "all-rouud corruption" (*Hindustan Times,* August 10), I am certain that unless *competent and effective institutional procedures and authorities are established and their decisions are statutorily enforced,* the well-meaning efforts of groups and individuals, even mass demonstrations and sporadic indignant section by the youth and other concerned groups, will not be able to stem the tide.

Fortunately, several committees and commissions, including the Chief Election Commission, have studied this question in its various forms and made a number of valuable recommendations. But for some reason either no action has been taken on them or the action has been inexplicably too dilatory. Had this matter been dealt with the same expedition and determination with which the constitutional amendments were carried through, the situation might have improved considerably. My concrete proposals, based on previous recommendations, are as below :

SOME SUGGESTIONS

First, I suggest that the decade old Santhanam Committee's report be taken up more seriously. Some of its recommendations have been lukewormly implemented, but its most important recommendations, to my mind, concerning the conduct of ministers has remained a dead-letter. The Committee had recommended the creation of a Central Vigilance Commission which was to "be given

by suitable legislation the powers that would be exercised by a Commission of Inquiry appointed under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, so that he (the Central Vigilance Commissioner) may undertake any inquiry relating to transactions in which public servants are suspected or alleged to have acted improperly or in a corrupt manner. . ." The present situation is the Commissioner functions on an informal and insecure base by virtue of a more executive order, a government resolutions dated February 11, 1964. It is desirable that the office should be given a statutory backing and statutory powers.

Statutory Commission of Inquiry

Further, while the recommendation in regard to public servants has been *imperfectly* implemented, the one in regard to ministers, mentioned above, has been shelved. The result has been a crop of inquiries set up mostly by political opponents in power, which have taken the aspect more of political vendetta than of serious judicial procedure, notwithstanding the impartiality of the enquiring judges. The Senthanam Committee recommended a much better procedure, namely, that "specific allegation of corruption on the part of a minister (which term I construe to include Chief Ministers and the Prime Minister too—J.P.) at the Centre or (in) a State should be promptly investigated by an agency whose findings will command respect. If a formal allegation is made by any 10 members of Parliament or a legislature in writing addressed to the Prime Minister or Chief Minister, through the Speakers and Chairman, the Prime Minister or Chief Minister should consider himself obliged, by convention, to refer the allegations for immediate investigations by a Committee. . .".

The Committee suggested by the Santhanam Report was to be drawn from a national panel constituted by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.

Lokpal and Lok Ayukta

My view is that instead of such a Committee we may have proper Commission of Inquiry, but it is important that the institution of inquiries into specific charges of misconduct *should not be left to the sole discretion of the executive.* In this connection, the recent Tamil Nadu Public Men Inquiry Act, 1973, may be referred to and improved upon.

Second, the Administrative Reforms Committee had recommended in October 1966, the institution of the offiee of a Lok Pal at the Centre and of Lok Ayukta in the States, with wide statutory powers. For reasons that are not clear, the Government of India took over 18 months to make up its mind; and it was only on the 9th May, 1968 that the Lok Pal Bill was first introduced in Parliament. It was passed by the Lok Sabha in August 1969, but it made no further progress owing perhaps to the power-struggle that was brewing within the Congress then and that burst out into the open in September 1969. After the Congress split, Indiraji was busy in consolidating her position, for which such spectacular steps were taken as statization of the major banks, abolition of the privy purses, etc., but the Lok Pal Bill was not considered important enough to be dealt with the same expeditions. It was only after Indiraji's great electoral victory in 1971, that the Lok Pal Bill was reintroduced in the new Parliament on 11th August, 1971. Many spectacular Acts have been passed since the victory, such as the Constitutional Amendment Acts but the Lok Pal Bill in its own way more important than the others, has been languishing until today. This and the other delays and omissions pointed out below suggest a deplorable lack of any sense of urgency on the part of the Government of India in dealing with a concerous disease not only of the body politic but of the nation as a whole.

As for the states, they seem to be even more leisurely in this matter than the Centre. Maharashtra was the first state, I believe, where the relevant statute was passed and a Lok Ayukta appointed with statutory powers. The Pande Ministry in Bihar appointed one of the senior-most I.C S. officers of the State as Lok Ayukta, but I am not sure if the office has been created by statute and given statutory powers. The creation of such an office by a mere government order would be to repeat the sad experience of the Chief Vigilance Commissioner. Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are the other states where some steps have been taken in this direction, but no law has yet been passed.

However, let me not create the impression that the appointment of a Lok Pal and Lok Ayuktas will in itself cure the disease of corruption so rampant among ministers and civil servants. This is not the place to go into the question, but if the Lok Pal Bill and the Maharashtra Ayukta Act, which is claimed to be patterned after the former, were carefully scrutinised, it would be discovered that

the action of these vital officers is severely limited and hemmed in by restrictive provisions. It is in many ways a case of giving by one hand and taking away by the other.

Postings and Transfers

Third, a fertile and well-known source of corruption at the state level, which embraces M.L.A.s, local party funtionaries and even ministers, is the matter of transfers, postings and promotions of subordinate and higher government servants of all departments. Not only is this a source of corruption, but it also occupies most of the time of the ministers. The remedy for this also is institutionalization of the system. It should be ruled, and if necessary enforced by suitable law, that ministers would be concerned with transfers, postings, etc. of only IAS and other equivalent officers, and that the rest of the business should be dealt with by appropriate committees of departmental heads presided over by the Chief Secretary. Any interference by M.L.As. or other party men or even ministers should be held against the government servant concerned. The partymen concerned should also be given a warning by the leadership. I know that this is easier said than done, but if the party leadership is keen to fight down corruption and make its party a fit instrument of service to the people, the evil. I am sure, could be reduced to a minimum.

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ORIGIN OF A NATION

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

The question of national integration has been much to the fore in recent months. It is one of the highest aspirations—if not the highest—of the India people to become an integrated and strong nation. This aspiration was expressed most authoritatively at the National Integration Conference held in September-October 1961 in New Delhi. There is a strong feeling in the country that our very future as a people would be brought into question if this task of nation-making was not properly and speedily fulfilled.

If becoming a nation is of such vital importance it behaves us to take a closer look at the phenomenon of nationhood. First, it has been found to be extremely difficult to define precisely what a nation is. The word has a long history and its meaning has undergone a considerable process of evolution. I am indebted to Fredrick Hertz's *Nationality in History and Politics* (*London 1957*) for what follows.

Originally *natio* meant a backward tribe. Civilised peoples, as of Greece and Rome, called themselves *gens* or *populus*. At the beginning of the Middle Ages the word nation was used in Germany and France to designate the higher ruling class in opposition to the *volk* or *peuple*. In former times the chieftain of an Irish clan was called "captain of his nation." The meaning of the word gradually evolved in Western usage and came generally to refer to a free, self-governing poople or a people constituted as a state.

The definition, as will be seen, is not eatirely satisfactory because many states are composed of different nations or nationalities The Scots and Welsh, for instance, regard themselves as nations though they live in a common state with the English. Over 70 nationalities live together in the Soviet Russian state.

ORIGIN OF A MODERN NATION

In the long history of our country there is no word or concept found to correspond with the modern concept of nationality. And this brings me to the second point, I wish to make about the modern nation : namely, that whatever the long history of the word the nation in its modern sense is comparatively of recent origin.

Some of the elementary traits of nationality, writes Hertz, may be as old as humanity, but the "more complicated phenomena have gradually arisen at different times " While it is not possible to state definitely when nationality as we know it today was born, it would not be wrong to say that the second half of the 18th century saw its first beginnings. The 19th was *par excellence the* century of nationalism.

The scene of this new development in human history was Western Europe. Why should it have been so is not very clear. For the present let it suffice to point out that it was not as if human society had to reach a "higher" stage of civilisation to give birth to the modern nation. To quote Hertz again : "India, China and the Islamic peoples brought forth great and comparatively homogenous civilisations, but the idea of modern nationality was alien to them before they were permeated by European ideas." "In Europe itself," Hertz goes on to say, "ancient Greece or medieval Italy and Germany possessed very high civilisation while there was hardly any national solidarity between the different peoples into which each was divided. A high level of civilisation was even adverse to national unity on a wide scale. Athens, Florence and Nuremberg were proud of the splendour of their own achievements and looked down upon their backward kinsmen in other cities. . . . History shows that the progress of civilisation was often accompanied by a weakening of national sentiments."

ORIGIN OF A NATION

If then it was not the progress of civilisation that produced modern nations, what were the forces that brought them into being ? I shall presently examine this question. For the movement it would be helpful to keep in mind that to be a nation does not necessarily mean to be terribly civilised Let us keep in mind that while civilisation is an end desirable in itself, nationalism can only be a means to an end.

I should like now to consider with you some of the common characteristics of modern nationhood and apply them to our own. Scholars have distinguished between legal and social or political nationhood or nationality. The first is the objective and the second the subjective aspect of nationalism. Legally or objectively considered, a nation usually has three essential attributes : (a) a well-defined territory that it calls its own; (b) political unity represented by a common state to which all citizens owe allegiance; (c) recognition by other nations, and by international law, as a distinct, sovereign nation. A legally defined nation might will be composed of a number of nations which in some respects consider themselves distinct from one another but yet accept willingly a common state.

NATION AND STATE

How a nation comes to be associated with a certain territory—and therefore with the corresponding state—depends upon a complex of factors, often on accidents of history, including the accident of leadership. The process is well illustrated in the case of our own nation. Incidentally an examination of the process might help in overcoming the psychosis from which many in this country suffer as a result of partition.

First of all let us remind ourselves that until the experience of British rule we were never a nation in the modern sense of the term. Undoubtedly there was an indefinable unity in which our ancestors shared. There was even the territorial concept of the land of Bharat, Bharatvarsha, which was bounded in the north by the Himalayas and in the south by the seas. But that sense of unity so eloquently spoken by Rabindranath was not a nationalistic sentiment but a spiritual and cultural sentiment that was based

upon a common outlook on life, "unity of spirit" as Tagore called it, and a common pattern of social living.

It was only when British rule was established over the entire length and breadth of the country that India was united politically under one government. That political unity was, however, imposed from above and did not in itself constitute nationhood. It was in the process of opposition to this imposed rule that Indian nationalism took its birth.

An interesting point that might be raised here is whether the reaction to British rule would have been the same, that is to say nationalistic in the modern sense, if Great Britain had not been transformed meanwhile into a nation. Is it not reasonable to suppose that if Elizabethan England for instance had conquered the whole of India, opposition to it—successful or otherwise—would have followed the traditional dynastic pattern rather than the modern nationalistic one.

TWO-NATIONS THEORY

Be that as it may, Indian nationalism grew up as a reaction to aggressive British nationalism. But unfortunately it was not strong enough to weld together psychologically all the people of India into one nationality. The result was that almost on the eve of independence there arose a New concept of nationality which challenged the older one. We all recall with a twitch of the heart that tragic clash between the two-nation and one-nation theories. The two-nation theory was undoubtedly ill-conceived and ill-founded, because if the history of national origins and growth proves anything it is that religion alone never determines nationality.

A combination of factors, however, conspired and India was partitioned. But, the two nation theory did not have an unqualified victory. It had proclaimed that the Hindus and Muslims were two distinct nations which must live separately in their own sovereign nation-states. But in the event vast numbers of people belonging to these so-called nations were left behind on either side of the partition. In sober contemplation the partition of India would appear to have been a clumsy device which settled nothing and satisfied none. If we add to that the holocaust, the misery and suffering, the moral degradation and debasement which

followed it one cannot but be appalled at the historic folly.

It is not, however, to lament a historical fact that I have brought up the question here. My purpose is to demonstrate how a turn of history can be responsible for the delimitation of "national" territory and how there is nothing immutable or sacrosanct about it. It is quite conceivable that partition could have been avoided even with the consent of all concerned, and where there are two nations today there might have been only one.

The role of events of history in giving rise to nations might be appreciated even better if we consider what might have been the situation if Britain or any other foreign nation had never established its rule over India and forcibly unified the country. The Mughal Empire, which in any case never extended to the whole of India, was breaking up. Marathas, Sikhs, Rajputs, Tipu Sultan and lesser persons and groups were contending among themselves for supremacy.

Can it be said with any assurance that there would have been today a single national state in India, or at any rate not more than two ? Those who talk sentimentally about undivided India might give serious thought to this question and also not forget the fact that the political divisions and the struggle for power of those days rarely followed religous or communal lines. True, there did exist a degree of cultural "unity" in Hindu society at that time. There was also, it is true a discernible process afoot towards a cultural synthesis between the Hindu and the Muslim ways of life But, the history of Western Europe has shown that cultural unity does not necessarily lead to a single national state. So while it is difficult to say with any assurance what would have happened if the British had not brought the whole of India under one government it is a sobering experience to realise that undivided India would have been perhaps one of the lesser possibilities. This thought should bring some solace to those who even now eat out their hearts over partition and consider it their patriotic duty to undo it.

I shall go further and say that this thought should help cure that psychosis of which I spoke earlier—the hidden disease of the present-day Indian mind, compounded of suppressed pain, anger and frustration, that partition caused. That pain, anger and frustration could be sublimated if we took a healthy and realistic view of our history and understood its true message and

significance.

CRUX OF A NATION

Let me proceed now with the discussion of the characteristics of nationhood Experience has shown that legal nationality is not enought. A nation might have its state and well-defined territory and yet lack the substance of nationality. That substance is defined as "national consciousness' or "national sentiment." "Without a sufficient measure of this consciousness," says Hertz, "there is no nation." When we speak of national integration in our own country, we mean precisely the development of this very consciousness of nationality.

But this consciousness or sentiment is an exceedingly elusive thing and whether or not a specific people possess it in sufficient degree is very difficult determine. It is a product of varied historical experience, which is seldom the same for every nation. It is therefore difficult to generalise and lay down prescriptions on how to develop national consciousness. It would be interesting to quote here from Hertz two views of two distinguished Europeans on the question. John Stuart Mill "saw the essence of nationality in the mutual sympathy of its adherents and in their desire to be united under a government of their own, produced through a community of history and politics and through feelings of pride and shame, joy and grief connected with experiences of the past." According to Ernest Renan, the great French philosopher and author of the famous *Life of Jesus*, "it is not race, religion, language, state, civilisation or economic interests that make a nation" "The national idea," according to him "is founded on a heroic past, great men true glory. Common experience leads to the formation of a community of will. More than anything else it is common grief that binds a nation together, more than triumphs. A nation, therefore, is a great solidarity founded on the consciousness of sacrfices made in the past and on willingness to make further ones in the future. The existence of a nation resembles a plebiscite repeated every day."

These are illuminating visions, but they also show the complexity of the matter. In the course of our long history much community of experience has been accumulated. We shared much joy and grief, pride and shame. But apparently there has not been

enough of it to create among us in sufficient measure a consciousness of nationality; otherwise there would not have been such deep concern now over the question of national integration. As a matter of fact, there were elements in our community of experience which acted as barriers to integration, and even led to actual disintegration as in the case of partition. Moreover, there are certain experinces such as sharing grief or glory which cannot be made to order.

NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS A BASIC INGREDIENT

Before I proceed further with the question of developing national consciousness, the most essential prerequisite of national integration, I should like to turn to the question put earlier, namely what were the historic forces which brought the modern nation into being ? Nationalism is now a worldwide phenomenon, and we see nations being born before your eyes at it were as in Africa. It was not through one and the same process however that they all came into existence.

Broadly speaking, the existing nations can be divided into two classes In one class would be those which became nations through an autonomous process, that is to say as a result of forces which grew up within their own areas. These might be called the "original" nations. The other class of nations arose as a "reaction" to the original nations. This reaction was of two kinds because it took place in two different sets of circumstances.

In the older feudal empires such as those of the Hapsburgs and the Czars in which a ruling dynasty kept under subjugation different peoples the reaction was that of quickening of "national" consciousness, which in turn expressed itself in a demand for "national" freedom. The other type of reaction occurred among the colonial peoples the newly established nation states had conquered. This reaction, of course, took time to materialise because the necessary conditions had to develop in the feudul and primitive societies before national sentiments could be born.

The point I wish to emphasise here is that the growth of nationalism in both the old feudal and the new colonial empires could not have been possible unless the new phenomenon of modern nations and nation-states had become manifest. I am not suggesting that before that there used to be no reaction to conquest and subjugation. My point is that in former days the reaction

used to take the traditional form of dynastic opposition or that of just a people, not a nation in the modern sense, rising against the conqueror or oppressor

REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENTS

How then did modern nationalism originally come into existence ? To my mind it arose *mainly* on account of two revolutionary developments in Western Europe : one, the French Revolution, the other the Industrial Revolution. France and England naturally became the original models of modern nationhood. The French Revolution was mainly a social revolution, while the Industrial Revolution was mainly of a scientific-*cum*-technological nature. The first laid down the political base and the second created the economic framework of the modern nation-state.

The French Revolution accomplished two revolutionary tasks : it revolutionised totally the old concept of power and sovereignty, and it carried out the new revolutionary concept dramatically into decisive section. Until the French Revolution the accepted view at any rate in Europe was that both power and sovereignty resided in the king. It was not possible under that kind of political ideology and system for modern nationalism to be born

Kings and nobles, while they ruled over their kingdoms and principalities, were rather cosmopolitan in their sympathies and outlook as Elie Kedouries has pointed out in his *Nationalism* (London, 1960), though they often fought among themselves they were tied to one another by marriage and traditional feudal ties. The people over whom the princes ruled were so kept out of the politics of the day and were therefore so apolitical that they just could not come to acquire national consciousness, which is a political sentiment.

The French Revolution completely changed all that. It proclaimed that power and sovereignty resided in, and were derived from the people, More important than that it demonstrated that the people could assert their sovereignty and overthrow the power of kings and establish their own. The people were thus drawn into the vertex of politics and come to be closely associated with the state. At that point the feudal state began to be transformed into a nation-state and the people into a modern nation. The

economic forces that the commercial and industrial revolutions had simultaneously set in motion completed the process. They had indeed contributed in no small measure to the political revolution itself. It need hardly be pointed out that the economic and political forces constantly act and react on each other, and only for the purpose of analysis can they be separated.

RISE OF MIDDLE CLASS

The Industrial Revolution created a fairly large middle class which found it necessary to us the established state directly or indirectly to protect and expand its economic interests. The further strengthened the association of the people with the state. It was soon found that the economic interests of the new Industrial-*cum*-commercial class was distinet from the interests of other states and their peoples. The cosmopolitan, or at any rate extrateritorial, outlook of the feudal ruling class came in time to be replaced to a narrow nationalistic outlook. While the rise of industrialism brought into being narrow nationalism, within the national territory it helped erase parochialism and localism. The second process was of vital importance to the growth of the modern nations. Thus, the exigencies of history which determined the territorial limits of a nation and the political and economic changes brought about by the two revolutions together created modern nationalism. Undoubtedly other factors played a part, but not to my mind the same decisive part that these three played. In fact, the first factor, the exigencies of history, would include many other factors as I have already pointed out.

What has already been said should be enough to show that it is not such a wonderful thing to be a nation as is usually imagined. If a balance sheet is drawn the following would be the credit and debit sides respectively :

1. Uniting or integrating force : tribalism, ruralism merged into nationalism.	1. Divisive forces have sharpened divisions between one nation and another.
2. Growth of civil society inside.	2. Intense hostility towards other nations and internal wars.
3. Growth of equality—	3. Exploitation, conquest

economic, social and political, etc.	etc. of one nation be another.

Let us look at our task in this perspective. Two of our great teachers and leaders—Tagore and Gandhi—have given us a vision of nationalism that is based on that "unity of spirit which makes of the entire human race one single nation of man.

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THE CONCEPT OF INDIAN NATIONHOOD

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

For the understanding and promotion of Indian unity or national integration, it is first of all necessary to clarify the concept of Indian nationhood. During the long struggle for national freedom there had emerged a clear enough concept of a single, composite, non-sectarian Indian nationhood. But the fact that there had also emerged at the close of that struggle a rival concept based on Mohammed Ali Jinnah's two-nation theory—a separate Hindu nation and a separate Muslism nation—resulting in the division of the country and establishment of an Islamic State, clouded the freedom movement's concept. As was only to be expected, the two-nation theory was not slow, particularly after partition, to strengthen in this country the cry of a Hindu nation, which had in fact already been raised during the period of the freedom struggle.

Certain other factors have also contributed to the development, which need to be understood. First, though the Hindus are in an over-whelming majority in this country, they still suffer from the psychology of a minority. This is because : (a) the Hindu community is a divided house owing to the caste system and untouchability; and (b) the Hindus, though in a majority, had lived for centuries under the rule of non-Hindu minorities, chiefly Muslim and Christian, who had originally come from outside India. Given the minority mentality it is not difficult to see why the slogan of Hindu Rashtra' should be appealing and attractive to

them.

Second, while it was easy during the freedom struggle to appreciate that success required the joint effort of all communities, thus promoting the concept of a single composite nationhood, after independence there was no such compulsion left, particularly as increasing numbers of the majority community began to be persuaded that, being in an over-whelming majority, they could easily impose their will over the minority communities.

How dangerous this concept of nationhood could be, in spite of its attractiveness to immature minds, not only for the unity of the Indian nation but also to the Hindu community itself, due to its deep divisions, is little realized by the protagonists of *Hindu Rashtra*. They also fail to realize that just as the goal of national freedom required the joint effort of all communities, so does the present goal of national strength and national development.

As the *Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh* (R.S.S.) is the main protagonist of *Hindu Rashtra*, the comment of its Central Executive on the Srinagar meeting of the National Integration Council may be of interest. In a resolution it is reported to have said that 'a well-consolidated Hindu society which rose above all differences of caste, sect, party or language could alone form base for real national integration.'[1]

There can be no objection to the consolidation of any community, provided it does not lead to a separatist mentality, inter-communal alienation, communal politics, and domination of one community, no matter how large, over another.

It is difficult to understand what the R.S.S. executive means by a well-consolidated Hindu society rising above party. If it means that Hindus, by virtue of being Hindus, should all belong to a single party, it is a very dangerous thought that recalls to the mind the pre-partition slogan—'*Gar tu Muslim hai, to Muslim League men aa*'. (If you are a Muslim, join the Muslim League) If in this manner every community were to have its own exclusive party and politics, national unity would become an impossibility.

It should be noted that there is also a strong movement among Muslims led by the *Jamaat-e-Islami* aiming at consolidating the Muslims, not only as a separate religious but also as a social and political community. The next natural step can only be the assertion of a Muslim nation. Similar developments are bound to follow in every other sizeable community if *Hindu Rashtra* and not

Bharatiya Rashtra becomes the goal of the predominant Hindu community.

If the people of India with their many diversities are to become an emotionally united nation and are able to preserve and strengthen their political unity, they cannot but deliberately and understandingly choose the ideal of a composite, non-sectarian nationhood and work actively to that end. It is the task of this Convention to clear away all mental cobwebs and give a bold and unambiguous lead in this regard.

There is a view that 'the achievements of our sages and savants, *Smritikars* and *purankars*, poets and artists, statesmen and warriors comprise really the warp and woof of our national heritage and provide the real basis of India's national oneness'. In this sense 'India is an ancient nation', and it is fallacious to regard it to be 'yet a nation in the making'.[2]

The confusion here is between the cultural unity of a people and their political unity. Despite the fact that the people of India, from the Himachal to the Setu, shared for centuries (with local variations) a common cultural heritage, they very rarely belonged to a single political state. Nor is this a peculiarly Indian phenomenon. Elsewhere too, such as in Europe or the Arab world, cultural unity has co-existed for centuries with political disunity.

Our central concern, at the present moment of our history, is to ensure that the political unity established by the Constitution should be made firm and enduring. Events have shown that even those sections of the people who share India's ancient heritage have not hesitated, when aggrieved, whether rightly or wrongly, to harbour, even proclaim, secessionist sentiments Therefore, it would be wrong to think that the task of moulding a modern nation out of the diverse elements of Indian society has already been completed by the achievements of our savants and sages.

There is another view that considers the sense of belonging to India's historic past and of being one with all those who share that past as being an essential qualification of a true Indian national. National integration according to this view mainly consists in inculcating this sense of belonging and identity. There is no doubt that those, for instance, who may think that Indian history began with the first Muslim or Charistian invasion and who feel no attachment to the India of earlier times will be lacking

in the deeper emotional qualities that an Indian national is expected to possess. It is interesting to notice that as modern nationalism develops in such ancient lands as Iran or Egypt, for example, the Iranians and Egyptians, despite their history, are rediscovering themselves in their ancient glory.

At this point, it is also necessary to bear in mind that our national heritage includes not only what has come down to us from ancient times but also what came later. There has been in this country from times immemorial a commingling of foreign cultures and races with the indigenous ones. In the case of the later arrivals such as Islam and Christianity, when political adversity drove the Hindu society to defensive, devices, the commingling was much slower. Nevertheless, Indian Christians and Muslims are very much Indian in their blood, appearance, ways of life, caste attitudes (whether for good or ill), language (even Urdu is very much an Indian language), literature and other arts, thought and philosophy, material culture. Even their religions have come to acquire a quality of Indianness. In their turn they have also had a profound influence on Indian philosophy, science, literature, music, architecture, painting, the religious teaching of the medieval saints. Had politics not created barriers and bred deep hostilities, there is no doubt the commingling would have gone much farther. However, the point to emphasise here is that our national heritage is a very complex affair and includes all that we have inherited not only from the past millenia but also from the past centuries of our history. It is not only a question of Muslims and Charistians and other with religions of foreign origin accepting India's ancient past as a part of their national heritage, but also of Hindus and others of indigenous religions accepting India's medieval and recent past as a part of their national heritage. There may be much in the two periods that each may reject, but by and large all Indians much accept the totality of Indian history as their own.

In order to avoid possible misunderstanding, it should be added that a feeling of identitly with a country's past does not at all imply blind acceptance of or admiration for, all that belonged to that past. It should also be stressed that the kind of emotional identification discussed above is a delicate process requiring patience, mutual respect and understanding and accommodation. Any attempt to hasten the process by force or intimidation can only produce further alienation and national disruption.

In conclusion, it seems necessary to point out that, though the proposed National Conventions are being organized with the express purpose of trying to work out a national consensus on some of the important questions facing the nation, the two concepts of nationhood discussed above can hardly be made to agree. An all-inclusive Indian nation is fundamentally different from a Hindu nation. Protagonists of each will necessarily follow different roads to national unity. Protagonists of the first concept would look upon all citizens of India, irrespective of religion, language, etc., as 'sons of the soil', while protagonists of the other (such as Mr Golwalkar) would consider only Hindus as sons of the soil and treat Muslims and Christians as 'aggressor'. Therefore, it would be a most valuable contribution of the forthcoming Convention on National Unity and Democracy to clarify this issue. Continued ambiguity regarding it and the failure of the secular parties, who together form an over-whelming majority of political opinion in the country, to face this issue have left the field unchallenged to the protagonists of *Hindu Rashtra* and Muslim separatism, causing grave danger to the unity of India and the character of the Indian nation.

Notes and References

1. P.T,I., report, *Times of India*, 9 July, 1968.
2. Atal Behari Bajpayee, *The Statesman*, 13 June, 1968.

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NATIONAL UNITY : SECULARISM

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Implicit in the foregoing discussion on the concept of nationhood was the issue of secularism. By its very definition "Hindu Rashtra", as conceived by its advocates, is antisecular because it considers Hindus alone "sons of the soil," that is to say first-class citizens. On the other hand Bharatiya Rashtra is disruptive of national unity because any attempt to impose a second class status on Non-Hindus must lead to endless internal strife and ultimate disintegration.

Indeed, as pointed out in the previous section, it is doubtful whether in view of differences of caste and creed and the scourge of untouchability any attempt to build a Hindu nation on a communal and religious basis would not result in greater disruption of the Hindu community itself. To sum up, in view of the nature of Hindu society, as also of the multi-religious and multi-communal nature of Indian society, secularism in national affairs is an inescapable requirement for national unity.

As the term secularism is given a variety of meanings it is perhaps necessary to indicate the sense in which it is used here in the context of national unity. Secularism has often been equated with antireligion, atheism and materialism. It is obvious that in these senses it has no relevance to the unity of the Indian people, who are deeply religious. In the context of unity secularism should have as broad a meaning as possible so as to be generally acceptable to the people.

In this broad sense secularism has to be considered in relation to the state and to social life generally. Happily the fathers of the Indian Constitution took care to base the Indian state on secular principles even though the word secular does not appear at all in the constitution.

The brief note on "Secularism under the Indian Constitution"[1] describes the outlines of the constitution's secularism. It would appear from this that while the Indian state is not as rigorous as the American state, which in Thomas Jefferson's phrase raises "an impassable wall" between religion and state, it is more strictly secular than the English state, which upholds an established church to which among other things the sovereign must belong.

The Indian state has no official religion and maintains a benevolent neutrality towards all religions. But at the same time "it reserves to itself the right of legislating about all secular activity associated with religion" as also "the right to legislate for social welfare and reform . . . even thouge such legislation may interfere with religious beliefs and practices."

STATE AND RELIGION

The protagonists of "Hindu Rashtra" denounce the secularisation of the state. It is relevant therefore to point out that in Hindu political thought and practice state and religion were always kept apart. "The Hindu state, so far as we know, never attempted to impose a particular religion upon its people. Various creeds were permitted to practise and even propagate their faiths, build their places of worship and live in their own way. There are no traces in Indian history of the struggle for freedom of conscience which prevailed in Europe for many centuries".[2]

It is an undoubted fact that in India religious and philosophical thinkers were "able to enjoy perfect, nearly absolute, freedom for a long period. The freedom of thought in ancient India was so considerable as to find no parallel in the West before the most recent age,"[3] All authorities I believe are unanimous of this point. This incidentally shows up the claim of the "Hindu Rashtra" fanatics who aspire to establish Indian polity on the basis of Hindu culture.

The fact that in traditional Islam religion and state are inextricably linked makes it difficult for the Muslim community in

India to adjust itself to a secular state. Indeed the traditionalists among them seem to be prepared to go so far as to want the Indian state to be transformed into a Hindu state under which they would advise their co-religionists to live as *mlechhas* or *shudras*. It is interesting to note how at the extremes the Hindu and Muslim communalists meet and reinforce one another. This perpetual division of the nation as preached by them into Hindus and Muslims, not only as religious but also as political communities, erects a permanent and impassable barrier to national integration.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL AGE

Fortunately the realities of the modern world and the requirements of the scientific and technological age have caused a considerable disengagement between religion and state in some advanced Muslim states, the effect of which will no doubt be felt upon the Muslims of India. But far more important is the question how far the Hindus will succeed in preserving the secular character of the state. Happily again the advocates of "Hindu Rashtra" are a small minority and are often apologetic about their ideas, which they try to smuggle into the heart of the Hindu community under false pretences such as anti-Muslim propaganda and onesided, often false history.

As for the other religious communities, the issue of state and religion does not present much of a problem. For the Christian community the issue was settled long ago as a result of the prolonged struggle in Western Christendom between church and state, and the ultimate bifurcation of the two, differing only in degree in different Christian societies. In Sikhism, the Akal Takht, a religious institution, was no doubt a source also of supreme political authority, but except for the extreme communalists it is doubtful whether any appreciable section of Sikh opinion now advocates the subordination of the state to religion. By and large the Sikhs do uphold the secularisation of the state. This is equally, if not more, true of the other religious communities in the country.

As regards the application of secularism to social life generally the situation in the country is not as satisfactory as in respect of the state. This is due to the decline of true religion and the ascendancy of empty formalism, even of obscurantism. It is also

due to the economy of scarcity in which jobs and other economic opportunities are scarce in relation to competitors. This competition finds it convenient to take religious-communal (as also caste-communal) forms, which largely explains why so many of the educated are fiercely communal both in the religious and caste sense.

REQUISITES OF NATIONAL UNITY

It is not enough that the state should be secular for national unit but also that social life outside the proper field of religion should be secular. This has implications both for religious and non-religious aspects of social life. Three main implications may be emphasised here : (a) the individual in society, while adhering to his religion and considering it the best, should respect other religions and practise tolerance and understanding towards them; (b) social life, in its non-religious spheres, should be governed by rational, ethical and human attitudes rather than by creedal and communal considerations; and finally (c) religious practice itself should discriminate between the essentials of religion and its excrescences such as human sacrifice (as in the recent case reported from Rajasthan), untouchability and belief in high and low castes, as still widely practised in Hindu society, and polygamy as said to be sanctioned by Islam and similar social and moral evils, superstitions, etc. which are considered part of religion.

Indian society is by and large far from comprehending these implications today. Communal concepts of nationhood—Hindu, Muslim or other—deny and run counter to them. Therein lies a great danger to national unity and social amity. Unfortunately the present level of politics being what it is, politicians are not wanting who are prepared to exploit ever superstition, every obscurantist belief and every religious and caste prejudice.

This arrests the process of enlightenment which modern science and the revival of ancient Indian spirituality—as epitomised in the Upanishadic age when the Indian mind knew no shackles and soared to the highest—have ushered in. Considered from this point of view, the process of Indian unity is a process of intellecutual and spiritual enlightenment. May this convention given this process a clear and bold direction.

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1. M.C. Setalved, Secularism—Patel Memorial Lectures.
2. *Op cit.*
3. *Ibid.*

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NATIONAL INTEGRATION : ITS ESSENTIAL REQUISITS

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Nationhood is a rather recent social phenomenon. The modern nations are hardly more than a couple of centuries old. None of them was created in a day. The process of national integration was rather protracted, and not infrequently included phases of civil war. In the modern sense of the term, India was never a nation, nor is a nation today, nor can suddenly become one tomorrow. The process of integration will take time here as elsewhere. It might be shortened by wise leadership or bedevilled by narrowness and stupidity. Happily the National integration Council has given a wise lead in the matter.

Nationhood is made up of tangible and intangible elements, the latter constituting much the larger part of it. The most essential tangible elements of nationhood are :

(a) A well-defined territory;
(b) Political unity represented by

 (i) a constitution (written or unwritten);
 (ii) a common citizenship;
 (iii) a government with authority over the entire national territory and power to deal with other nations;

(c) In multi-lingual nations a workable medium or media of

communication between the constituent units.

The Indian nation has all these elements, though in respect to (c) the situation is in the natural process of evolution.

The intangible elements however, really, make for nationhood. These elements may be expressed in terms of attitudes of mind as below :

(a) an attitude of mind which makes it natural and normal for every citizen to regard loyalty to the nation as being above group or sectional loyalties;
(b) an attitude of mind which makes it natural and normal for every group or section of the nation to subordinate its interests to national interests;
(c) an attitude of mind which makes it natural and normal for the nation to think of the interests of every citizen and of every group and section of the nation.

National integration would mean in substance the creation of the above attitude of mind. These attitudes are largely absent at present.

PSYCHOLOGICAL REQUISITES

There is no single or simple answer to the question how these psychological requisites of nationhood can be produced. Different approaches will have to be made from different sides. The statement of the National Integration Conference emphasises some of those approaches I am sure there will be many others. The process as I have said above, will be long and arduous.

As matters stand there is one serious obstacle to the process of psychological intergation. In a vast country like ours with so many diversities it is natural that there should be all manner of disputes, discords and differences. We would be more than human if it were not so. Even among the peoples of well-integrated nations there are internal differences and disputes : political, economic, social, racial, religious, linguistic, etc. Even among blood brothers misunderstandings and quarrels take place. If the condition precedent to national integration is complete harmony and accord among all individuals, groups and sections making up

the Indian nation we might well have to wait until doomsday.

I do not mean to suggest that the existence of disputes and discord is a matter which should not receive serious attention, and that every effort should not be made to settle them. Nor do I mean to say that they do not obstruct the process of integration. But I do wish to stress that it should be remembered that even after the best efforts disputes and the like will remain. When differences occur in a small family, a vast family of 400 million cannot conceivably by free from them.

It is not the existence of disputes and quarrels that so much endangers the integrity of the nation as the manner in which we conduct them. We often behave like animals. Be it a village feud, a students' organisation, a labour dispute, a religious procession, a boundary disagreement or a major political question, we are more likely than not to become aggressive, wild and violent. We kill and burn and loot and sometimes commit even worse crimes When an Indian does such things to another Indian the psychological integration of Indians becomes a rather distant dream. When brothers quarrel and decide peacefully to separate they still remain brothers. But when they quarrel and draw out their swords and strike each other their brotherhood is at an end.

Likewise when Indians kill Indians and burn and loot, as happened at Jabalpur and Aligarh, and earlier on even a larger scale in Assam, the resulting hatred, suspicion, and ill-will create a psychological estrangement which makes it difficult for them to feel that they all belong to one another as citizens of the same nation. On the other hand, no matter what, and however serious, the quarrel, if every citizen takes a vow never to resort to violence the mere fact of the quarrels and disagreements will not do so much damage to the process of integration.

PEACE PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

Following this line of thinking I proposed on behalf of the Sarva Seva Sangh to the National Integration Conference that a campaign, which might be called the citizens' peace pledge campaign, should be launched under its aegis to obtain signatures or thumb impersssions on a pledge to keep peace. In that connection I also pointed out that while there was a good deal of talk in the country about nonviolence we had far to go to establish a civil

society.

A society of non-violence is far more difficult to achieve than a civil order of society. Non-violence requires the elimination of inequality and exploitation and the positive quality of love as the basis of social relations. A civil society is chiefly distinguished—though it has other characteristics too—by general acceptance of the rule that disputes between individuals or groups should be settled by peaceful means. Thus, the peace pledge campaign would also help us forwards the goal of a civil order of society.

I am happy that the Prime Minister and the conference took kindly to the suggestion of the Sarva Seva Sangh and incorporated it in the statement that was issued. This is what the statement said :

> The Conference welcomed the suggestion made by the Sarva Seva Sangh for launching a mass campaign for a pledge to be signed by every adult Indian to affirm his faith in the universal principle of civilised society to settle disputes by peaceful means and to abstain from resorting to physical violence in disputes with fellow citizens of India.

The Serva Seva Sangh had sugsested the following pledge, which too was endorsed by the conference and included in the statement :

> I, as a citizen of India, affirm my faith in the universal principle of civilised society, namely, that every dispute between citizens or groups or, institutions or groups of citizens, should be settled by peaceful means; and in view of the growing danger to 'the integrity and unity of the country I hereby pledge myself never to resort to physical violence in the case of any dispute, whether in my neighbourhood or in any other part of India.

It is now for the Council for National Integration to consider the matter in detail and chalk out a practical programme. While it was desirable, and in a way inevitable, that the council should be presided over by the Prime Minister and that the Chief

Ministers preponderated in it; such a composition robs it of independent initiative. Because of the pre-occupations of these members the council has not been able as yet to hold a single meeting since it was constituted I hope everybody agrees that the work of the council should not be made to wait upon the convenience of persons engaged in other work, no matter how important.

Meanwhile, I should like to make one or two further observations on the subject. I have been asked whether merely signing a pledge would prevent people from committing violence. The answer is obviously no. But, there can be no doubt that a nation-wide campaign of the kind in which all party leaders and leaders of other walks of life join cannot but create a powerful psychological climate which will have great educative value.

I suggest further that we might copy the Independence Day programme of pre-independence days It will be recalled that on January 26 every year the whole country celebratsd Independence Day, when the pledge was taken in tens of thousands of meetings all over the country. The practice was for the president of the meeting to read the pledge and the audience would follow him. It used to be rather impressive and effective.

A similar procedure might be adopted for the peace pledge campaign. Until the elections are over no national campaign of the other contemplated is feasible. I therefore, suggest that a national week, the week from April 6 to 13, be fixed for the proposed yearly campaign and a genuine effort made to make it a truly mass campaign. In that week not only will mass meetings be held where the peace pledge will be collectively administered but simultaneously a door-to-door signature campaign will be conducted.

It is sometimes asked who will do all this colossal work. This question is symptomatic of the decline of public life and activity after independence. I am sure there will be no dearth of volunteers if a proper lead is given and the required psychological climate created. It seems to me that the President and the Prime Minister should themselves lead the campaign and go on April 6—if the Council for National Integration accepts my proposal—from door-to-door to obtain at least 11 signatures each.

Needless to say workers of the Sarva Seva Sangh, including thousands of khadi workers all over the country, will be in the front rank of the volunteers. If the leaders of the political parties

took this up seriously there would be thousands of workers more. There are the village panchayats and the panchayat samitis, there are the schools and colleges, there are the numerous voluntary organisations of every kind. It should not be difficult for all this tremendous force to be organised and galvanised for this great national service.

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NATIONAL LANGUAGE*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

I feel I must raise my voice, however feeble, against the manner in which the Prime Minister is carrying on the language controversy since his return from abroad. It is a matter to be deeply regretted, as happened in the case of the states reorganisation issue, that the Prime Minister's manner or intervention often precipitates unnecessarily heated controvery. Controversy and debate are the food of democracy. But there are bounds beyond which these should not be carried on if the democratic way of life is to grow in a healthy manner. No one, whatever his views, would like to be called stupid. Moreover when the Prime Minister himself thinks it fit to use such language in a public debate, can it be wondered why marshals have to be called in to allow our legislatures to carry on their work with a medicum of decorum ? The two things are not so unrelated as they might appear at first sight.

This however is the less serious aspect—though it is serious enough—of the Prime Minister's present role in this vital national debate. The more serious aspect is the deliberate manner in which the real issue has been confounded and clouded over. The Prime Minister seems to be hitting out against a shadow. For barring a few extremists nobody suggests that English and other foreign languages should be banished from schools. The vast majority of

* Press statement issued from Patna, on October 7, 1962.

people in this country, including those who speak Hindi, would unhesitatingly agree with all that the Prime Minister has said about the importance of learning foreign languages to keep abreast of science and modern knowledge. They would even have no objection to *compulsory* teaching of English as a language at the appropriate stage.

STUDY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE

But no matter how important learning foreign languages might be none of them can become an effective and creative medium of education. There is general agreement that the medium of education must be the language of the child's environment. However desirable it might be for us to learn English, German and Russian the *medium* of education in this country must be the regional language Education through a foreign language can only result in mediocrity and stunting of originality and creativity.

All that however is not the real issue. The heart of the present controversy is whether any period of time should be defined within which English could be given up as an associate, or interstate, language and Hindi *alone* could come to acquire that status. The Government of India proposes to fix no time limit, and has aroused strong and widespread suspicion not only among Hindi-speaking people but also among others who wish to see Hindi become the national language. The suspicion is that the absence of such a limit would release the centre from any pressing, and real, responsibility to take the necessary steps to make it possible for Hindi *ever* to assume the role of a national language. Already there is a deep and widespread feeling that the present unpreparedness of Hindi to take on that role is due not so much to obstruction from the South as to the failure of the Central Government to fulfil its obligations in that behalf.

FAILURE OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

For instance states that had already taken steps to make Hindi the medium of instruction at the university stage had to reverse gear just because competitive examinations for the central services contiuued to be hold in English. It was not expected that

those exams would be held *only* in Hindi. But, if Hindi was to be enabled to become the national language steps should have been taken to see that Central examinations were held *both* in Hindi and English This is only one example of the lapse of the centre in this matter. Many more have been pointed out in the course of the present controversy.

For these reasons the plea for some sort of time limit has been strongly, and to my mind quite reasonably put forward. There is no need to be dogmatic about the length of time. Vinobaji's suggestion in this regard seems to be the wisest, namely, that the non-Hindi-speaking states themselves should be left free to determine the period of time required.

Cool consideration of this central question is likely to be far more useful in settling the present national debate than general opinions on the wisdom of learning foreign languages.

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AGGRESSIVE NATIONALISM : A DANGER TO THE WORLD

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

I am sorry that among the audience there is so much difference of opinion regarding the language in which I ought to speak. I must say that this growing habit among us of imposing our views on others is not conducive to democracy. Though we have accepted a democratic constitution and a democratic governmental set up most of us are unaware of the significance of these institutions.

A democratic way of life means tolerance of other people's opinions which must receive full and free expression Otherwise true democracy cannot function. Some people all over the country are constantly trying to prevent me from expressing my views and while they deny me the right to speak out for myself they themselves are making all kinds of propaganda to turn my countrymen against me.

Of course I don't want to give this undue importance as I do not really believe that anyone can stop me from doing what I feel I ought to do. I have decided to serve my country in my own light till my last day and this I will do even if it costs me my life or even if everybody forsakes me. And for this cause I shall not flinch from telling the truth as I see it.

I request you to dwell dispassionately on the problems which face us today. As a Hindu, I feel that two courses are open to us today : the one that was shown by Mahatma Gandhi and Gurudeva Tagore and the other that of Godse, the murderer of Gandhi. Will

you pause and think for once which one you are going to follow, I asked students at a Bangalore meeting the other day. Unfortunately a very few among us today believe in the course shown by Gandhiji and the atmosphere is charged with hatred and violence.

I must warn you that if these few sane voices don't raise their united protest now it will soon be too late because fascistic tendencies are growing very fast indeed. I am really amazed that in such a mad atmosphere Maitreyi Devi and a hundful of her colleagues are functioning at all and are able to organise a convention like this. The effort cannot be praised enough.

GURUDEV'S CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM

Here I must speak a few words about nationalism and national self-respect. I was reading Gurudev's *Nationalism* once again and I was amazed by the breadth of vision that he showed about 40 years back. He realised clearly that the aggressive nationalism which he saw in all the Western countries then was spreading disaster for the human race and therefore visualised a way out of this vicious atmosphere in the acceptance of internationalism as a higher goal. He abhorred chauvinism and jingoism and preached world brotherhood.

Mahatmaji used to say : "I am a nationalist, but my nationalism is neither narrow nor aggressive." We are living in a time when nationalism, as we practise it, creates more problems than it solves. A few days ago I went to Delhi and my God, everybody was talking of war with Pakistan. The Capital was seized by a war hysteria. I wondered what had happened to this country and I tried to argue with some I asked them : "Have you ever given any thought to what will happen to us if we declare war on Pakistan to solve this border dispute ? What will happen to our economic plans, our democracy and our non-alignment". A false sense of self-respect should not lead us to a suicidal war with Pakistan.

CASTEISM

Think over the problem of national integration too. The two biggest communities in India, the Hindus and the Muslims, have been living side by side for centuries now. What must we do to

to bring two parts of this truncated continent as close to each other as possible I sincerely believe that destiny will bring us together and the peace and prosperity of these two peoples, who are in fact the same people, lie in constant co-operation Such co-operation will be possible through a confederation or some other political organisation. But neither government is ready for it now, and the majority of the people in both countries are incapable of thinking in these terms.

So the time is not ripe yet and we have to create the preconditions for such developments. As I talk of the reunification of the two peoples I remember that the Hindu Mahasabha also has a similar aim. But do you think the means which they propagate will bring the subcontinent together ?

I am a nationalist in the sense in which Mahatmaji of Gurudev was though I am not fit to touch their feet I feel that enlightened national self-interest demands that we come to terms with Pakistan. Today all the world is talking of peace and can't we talk of peace with our nearest neighbour ? We cannot safeguard our national interests by following the wrong path. Why are we creating war hysteria instead of preparing our people for peace ?

Last year an antinuclear armament conference was held here. At that time one of the foremost peace-leaders of the world was discussing the prospects of peace with our late Prime Minister. He said the world was spending billions of dollars for research on the means of war, but why was not a single penny being spent for research on peace ? Does any government give any thought to this immensely more vital need ?

NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS

We are living in constant fear of China and Pakistan, and spending a vast amount of our resources in preparation for war. Should not we rather give more thought to the possibilities of fostering peace through international organisations ? Because our relations with Pakistan are bitter the minorities in both countries feel terribly insecure and whenever anything happens in Pakistan we take revenge in important rage on our fellow-countrymen and weaken our own nation. In no condition should the atmosphere in this country be charged with so much madness that a section of Indians should burn the houses or rape the women or strangle and

throw into fire the babies of another section of Indians. If we want to live a healthy and civilised life we must get rid of such blind communal passion.

Some people tell me that however much I try I shall not be able to change the heart of Pakistan because Pakistan was born in hatred and because it is to Pakistan's interest to have constant friction with India. But, I do not believe this reading of Pakistan's attitude to be correct. I have great faith in the new generation which is growing up in both countries. I am sure they will not be guided by medieval passions in this age of science and technology and revolutionary socio-economic ideas.

I am a humanist and I trust in human goodness. Can I accept that hatred and bitterness are the real feature of Hindu society ? No, the truer picture of our society is obtainable in attempts like this for fostering peace and amity. If we want to give this effort a sound foundation we have to start with a programme of reeducation of our people in the ways of love and sympathy. I believe this to be possible. Let the scope of this work enlarge every day and let us gradually realise our great Indian self in which there is tolerance and love for every human being.

37

INDIA DIVIDED*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Shri Rajagopalachari is reported to have said the other day that he did not care if India were divided into ten different parts, each sovereign and independent of the other. His immediate inspiration for making this remarkable statement was the recent Molotov amendment to the Russian constitution.

Rajaji is too informed a politician really to believe what he has been reported to say. He apparently talks in this fashion with a view to remove the suspicions that are harboured in certain quarters and to pave the path probably for rapprochement between the Congress and the League. But, he is doing himself an injustice by pretending to believe that he can ever succeed in his efforts by making fantastic and overreaching statements. The tragedy of Rajaji is due to a not uncommon fault of clever people : their proneness to discount the ability of the other fellow to see through their tricks.

But let us take Rajaji at his word. India divided into ten states ? Even a high school knowledge of Indian history should enable one to forecast the result of such a vivi-section of this country. Vivi-section obviously presupposes the existence of a widespread desire for separateness. Given this desire and the fact of division and undoubted foreign influences of a conflicting nature, India would present a picture not essentially different from

* In Lahore Fort, February 18, 1944.

that which existed at the dissolution of the great empires of Indian history. The only outcome of such a confused state would be cultural and economic backwardness, political weakness and eventual subjugation again to a strong foreign power or to more than one power.

In fact, if the desire for the division of the country came generally to be shared by the Indian people, freedom from the present subjugation itself would become impossible and in the place of Rajaji's ten free states of India there would be prepetuated the one undivided Indian Empire groaning under the heels of His Majesty John Bull. The forces that are working for the division of India are anti-freedom forces of slavery and between them and nationalist India no compromise is possible. To say that without such a compromise freedom could not be won is a self-contradiction. It is to underestimate grossly the strength of Indian nationalism.

MOLOTOV AMENDMENTS

Let us turn now to the recent Russian constitutional innovation. There is no doubt that the Molotov amendments will be seized upon by all sorts of quacks to popularise their own nostrums. But for those who are seriously considering the future constitutional development of India, the Russian experiment can be of very doubtful value. It is necessary to remember that the so-called decentralisation has been introduced into the Soviet state structure not as a measure of internal adjustment but to answer certain diplomatic requirements of Russia's international relations that have arisen during the war and are expected to become more pressing in the postwar period.

Internally there can be no question of loosening the central dictatorship of the Communist hierarchy. It is also essential, where Russia is concerned, to distinguish between theory and practice In 1936, the Stalin constitution, was promulgated which was tom-tommed through-out the world by the Russian fifth column as "the most democratic constitution in the world". And yet in that very year began the most brutal suppression of political dissidents—it would be wrong to call them even political opponents—known to human history.

It may be safely presumed therefore that the new powers

that have developed upon the constituent republics of the Soviet Union are entirely for purposes of Soviet world diplomacy rather than real measures of devolution. There can also be little doubt that even while these measures of decentralisation were publicly announced secret administrative and party measures must have been taken to concentrate even more power in the hands of Stalin and his Junta.

TWO-FOLD BASIS OF FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

But let us for argument's sake concede that there has been a real devolution of power and political decentralisation in the Soviet Union Does that justify a demand for the partition of India ? First, the recent Russian amendments leading to decetralisation have not *broken up* the Soviet Union and divided it into a number of *independent* states. As for the right to secede, it is an old constitutional guarantee that exists since Lenin's time. But there is all the difference in the world between recognition of the right to separate and actual separation.

So far as Russia is concerned, the nature of the Russian state has always reduced this right to a nullity. In India it is not as if the units that are prepared to join the Indian Union are seeking to *reserve the right* to secedes if they find cause later to do so. What is demanded is an outright separation and division of the country. There is a world of difference between the two positions : the first pre-supposes a desire to stick together and make a serious experiment in joint nationhood while the latter kills the very possibility of union by immediate partition.

In every federal constitution of the world where the right of secession is guaranteed, it has a two-fold basis : while on the one hand, it provides the ultimate solution of intra-national conflicts, on the other hand it rests on the ground that mutual goodwill and adjustment and the desire to pull together would even make unnecessary the exercise of this ultimate constitutional right.

I believe the Congress would have no difficulty in guaranteeing this right to the federating units in India provided there was a genuine desire to start as a united nation and to preserve national unity to the utmost extent possible. The Congress would do this precisely in the hope and belief that the experiment in united nationhood would soon remove suspicion and cement the bonds

that naturally exist among all the sections of the Indian people. It can be appreciated how different from this is the position that demands immediate and initial partition of the country. To that the Congress can never agree.

RUSSIAN CONSTITUTION

Turning to Russia, the second point to note is that Russia is not just a conglomeration of independent republics but a highly centralised union with a powerful and effective central government which has the means to check disruptive tendencies and prevent the dissolution of the union.

Lastly—and this is the most important point—the Russian state is monolithic, based on a single political party, the organisation of any other party being illegal and treasonable. In view of this one-party rule and in view of the highly centralised structure of that party, all paper freedoms, rights and enfranchisements lose their meaning.

Suppose Latvia is declared a member republic of the Soviet Union, only the Communist party of Latvia would be allowed to function there and all political, economic, cultural and social power would be centred in that party, or rather its higher bureaucracy. But, the Communist Party of Latvia would not be an independent body; it would be a part of, and subject to, the all-Russian Communist Party, with the Stalin-Molotov caucus at the top.

In this fashion all the rights and freedom that the Latvian Republic would be guaranteed by the constitution of the Soviet Union would be effectively shackled and hamstrung by this party mechanism and the suppression of all parties but the Communist Party.

If we were to draw an Indian parallel, it would be of some such fashion as this. The Congress, let us say, is the only political party that is allowed to exist anywhere in the country. The Congress then rules in every part of the country and suppresses *by force* all other rival parties. At the same time this very Congress grants the right to the various units of the Indian Union to secede if they so desire ! We have only to picture this state of affairs to realise what a farcry the Russian system is for us.

Whether the Russian system is good or bad is irrelevant to

the present discussion. What is of value for us is to remember that here in our own country no one worth bothering about advocates a monolithic state or one-party rule; nor is such a thing possible here, nor with the exception of British rule does any central power exist in India. In these circumstances, can the imitation of the devices of the Russian constitution be anything but fatal to us ?

INDIA'S PARTITION

Partition of the country is proposed as a solution for the minorities problem. But will partition *solve* the problem ? If we take the Muslims, for instance, and treat them as a minority, does the constitution of a state of Pakistan solve the problem of the Muslim minorities ? In areas where it is proposed to establish Pakistan, the Muslims are the majority and not the minority community. Even in a united India those areas would be ruled by Muslim-majority governments and the Hindus and others would be the minorities there.

It is true that the Muslim provinces would be in a minority at the centre, but apart from that even in an undivided India they would constitute a sort of Pakistan so far as provincial and local matters are concerned and would have their own minorities. In an independent Pakistan too the situation would remain the same except for central affairs. On the other hand in Hindustan (so-called), the part of India outside Pakistan, the Muslims would continue to be a minority community both as regards provincial and national matters.

Thus, neither in Pakistan nor in Hindustan would the minority problem be solved and the problem of the Muslim minority in areas where they are really in a minority would remain unaltered. It is clear therefore that the only object of Pakistan is to remove the Muslim-minority areas from the intereference of a centre where the Muslims do not constitute a majority.

But this is a problem of which, given mutual goodwill, it should not be difficult to find a much less drastic solution. The necessity of finding such an alternative solution becomes all the greater when it is considered that a division of the country would weaken both its parts economically, politically and in every other way. After all, when Hindus and Muslims are going to live

together both in Hindustan and Pakistan it appears to precipitate folly to divide the country.

TWO-NATIONS THEORY

We are aware that the Muslim League claim for partition is based on the theory that the Muslims in India constitute a separate nation and as such should have their own independent state. We do not think this claim would bear scientific scrutiny. It may conceivably be possible to claim that the Punjabis, including Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others, or the Sindhis, including again all the communities living in Sind, constitute a separate nation from let us say the Bengalis or the Tamils. But no social scientist would support the contention that the Punjabi-Muslims and the Bangali-Muslims constitute one nation and the Bengali-Hindus and the Punjabi-Hindus another.

Mere religion has never formed, obviously not in Islamic lands, the basis for a common nationality. The Arabs and Turks are both Muslims by religion but they constitute two distinct nationalities. It is very diffiult to define a nation, as the League of Nations Committee on Eurorean national minorities demonstrated after an exhaustive examination of the questions; but race, language, history, culture, religion, geography, tradition—all these go to create that intangible psychological product known as nationality. None of these various factors by itself creates a nation.

People of the same race constitute separate nations as witness the Slava : those with the same language do likewise as witness the English-speaking or Spanish-speaking nations of the world; likewise with religion, as witness the Muslims who constitute so many nations. Nor must a single nation have a single language, race or religion, as witness the Swiss, the British, the Americans, the Canadians, the Chinese. If we take race, language history, culture, geography, religion, tradition all together then India forms one single nation much more truly and really than do the separate communities living in this country.

NATION STATE

However, let us concede for the sake of argument that the

Muslims of India do constitute a separate nation. Does it follow necessarily that they should therefore separate from the rest of the country and constitute an independent state ? It it not possible for two nations to live together within a common state ? Does not history afford examples of such common statehood ? Do not the Scotch, the Welsh and the English live together under one government ? Do not the German, the French and the Italian Swiss from one national state ? Do not the British and French Canadians live together, is not the great American nation the result of the mingling of all the nationalities of Europe, are not practically all the South American nations multi-national in composition ? It seems highly illogical to demand a partition of the country merely because the Indian Muslims consider themselves a separate nation.

AUTONOMOUS PROVINCES

With the national minorities problem of European and other countries there has always been associated the phenomenon of oppression of the minority nationality by the majority. In India there is no such historical tradition In fact, it was the minority community which was till recently the ruling power and the oppressed or otherwise the majority Hindu community. It is true that a lot of dust was raised by the League about oppression of the Muslims in the Congress-governed provinces. But we do not think that the charges brought against the Congress ministries by the Pirpur committee would bear examination by an impartial tribunal.

Even granting that the charges were true, would the division of the country save the Muslim minorities in these provinces from oppression by the Hindu community ? The answer may be that if that oppression did not cease Pakistan would retaliate by oppressing its own Hindu minority But this remedy, if it can be said to be a remedy, would be available to the Muslim provinces even in a united India, for the Centre, whatever its nature, could never interfere in the internal administration of the autonomous provinces.

Thus, it would appear that Pakistan would solve none of the problems it seeks to except the one of the relation of the central government with the Muslim-majority provinces. We could willingly admit this solution if it did not endanger the growth and

development, prosperity and safety of the whole country, including both or all its parts, and if no other solution were available.

The Muslim fear is that the central Indian Government in which Hindus will be in a majority will dominate and interfere with the Muslim provinces, as with the others. There are two ways of removing this possibility. One is to define carefully and limit the powers of the central government and vest the residue in provincial governments. If the minimum possible powers are left with the centre, the possibility of its interfering with the provinces would be reduced to that extent.

The next problem is to ensure the powers vested in the national government are so exercised that no injustice is done to the Muslim community. To do this it is possible to provide for checks and balances. The central government, as all governments would have two main functions—legislative and executive.

Both legislature and executive may be so constituted that the Muslims may have no cause for fear. At the same time a final gurarantee may by constitutionally provided in the shape of the right to secede. The very existence of this right—of the possibility of its being exercised—would be a check on the majority.

These three measures should be enough to remove Muslim fears. At the same time they would preserve the unity of the country, which is the only guarantee of its future prosperity, development and power.

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HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

If anyone told a Congressman that the Congress was a Hindu body he would rightly feel indignant. Yet Congress leaders, other public leaders, nationalist editors, constantly talk of a Congress-League settlement as a settlement between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Why this confusion ?

The reason, to my mind, is that following the cue of the British we have been led to look upon the lack of unity in India as disunity among the communities. We talk endlessly of "communal unity" and equate it with national unity. This of course assumes that all political life in India is organised on communal lines, which obviously is not the case. Then why don't we start to analyse this muddle and state the position in clear terms ?

Some weeks ago, in the course of my comments on Dr. Abdul Latif's book I pointed out that there are two parallel developments in India—one the organisation of political and economic and cultural life on a national basis, the other the organisation of such life on a communal basis. Examples of the first type of organisations are the Congress, the Liberal Federation, the All-India Trade Union Congress, the States Peoples' Conference, the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industries, the Students' Congress, the Unionist Party and the Bangiya Krishak Proja Party.

Examples of the other type are the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha the Muslim State Peoples' Conference, the Muslim

*In Lahore Fort, August 10, 1944.

Chamber of Commerce, the Muslim Students' Federation and the Akali Dal. Of these two the national type of organisations have been by far the stronger, but recently fed by various adventitious circumstances the second type has been growing in strength. There has never been any conflict, though there has been difference of opinion among the first type of organisations.

NATIONAL VERSUS COMMUNAL FORCES

The conflict really is between the national and the communal force in our national life. A settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League is not to be a settlement between Hindus and Muslims but between national and communal ways of life. The ideal thing of course for our national growth would have been for the national tendencies and forces to gather such strength that communalism would have died.

But, the existence of a third party makes this impossible and an urgent need is felt now for an understanding between these forces. If such an agreement has become necessary let it be brought about but let us not misunderstand and misrepresent the character of this development. I wish this could be made clear to the country by someone at this time Will Gandhiji himself make it clear or will he blur the issues in his eagerness to reach an agreement ?

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CONGRESS-LEAGUE SETTLEMENT*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

I have been feeling for some time the need to integrate my thoughts on the problem of a Congress-League settlement. I have in the past months expressed views on this subject which appear contradictory. Writing on this problem in February this year I said : "In every federal constitution of the world where the right of secession is granted it has a double aspect : while on the one hand, it provides the ultimate solution of intranational conflicts, on the other hand, it rests on the ground that mutual goodwill and adjustment and desire to pull together would ever make unnecessary the exercise of this ultimate constitutional right.

I believe the Congress would have no difficulty in guaranteeing this right to the federating units in India provided there was genuine desire to start as a united nation and to preserve the national unity to the utmost extent possible. The congress would do this precisely in the hope and belief that the experiment in united nation hood would soon remove suspicions and cement the bonds that naturally exist among all the sections of the Indian people. It can be appreciated how much different from this is the position that demands immediate and initial partition of the country. To that the Congress can never agree".

Writing in the middle of July last, I said again; "The underlying principle of Rajaji's formula is contained in the Delhi resolution (of the Working Committee of the AICC). That resolution

*In Lahore Fort, August 20, 1944.

explicitly admitted the right of territories in India to self-determination. That same general idea has been put in concrete shape by Rajaji and no Congressman can take objection to it."

RIGHT TO SECEDE

There is an obvious contradiction between these two views. First, let me clear up the position of the Congress in this regard. I do not have before me the resolution of the Working Committee which conceded the right of self-determination to territories; therefore it is not clear to me in what circumstances that right was conceived to be exercised.

So far as I remember the resolution, it went on further than merely stating that the committee would not oppose the right of any territorial unit to claim self-determination. This might mean at least two things : first, that this right was to be exercised after the free Indian state had come into being; second, that it was to be exercised before the establishment of free India.

There is a great difference between the two. In the first case, we start as a united nation with one common constitution framed jointly : we make a serious attempt at living together, and only in the event of failure of the experiment of joint nationhood does a territorial unit exercise its right to separate. In the other case the country is partitioned, probably under British aegis, two or more separate constitutions are framed separately and India starts as two or more national states. I find it difficult to believe that the Working Committee had in mind the latter meaning when it framed its resolution at Delhi.

If the Working Committee conceived the exercise of the right of self-determination in the manner described in the first case above, the contradiction between my views expressed in February and July is resolved.

RAJAJI'S FORMULA

So much for the position of the Congress. The question before me is, irrespective of the Congress view of this matter, what is my own view of it today ? I have followed rather carefully the present controversy over Rajaji's formula. I am to some extent acquainted with Muslim communal opinion in Punjab through the columns of the *Inquilab Ehsan* and *Shabhaz.*

I have found no cause to change the opinion expressed in February last. And if the Working Committee meant to allow a territorial unit of the country to separate *before* the united Indian state had come into being and an experiment in living together had been made I am opposed to that resolution. Futher, if Rajaji's formula implies the same procedure I am opposed to it also.

I am prepared to go no further than conceding the right to self-determination *after* the United State of India had come into being and after a certain specified period had elapsed during which every part and section of the country and the people had a chance freely to fashion their lives in common with other parts and sections.

The question is : what happens if the Muslim League does not accept that position ? I do not for a moment believe than the League would agree to such a proposition; but I also never believed that our entire future progress was dependent on an agreement with Mr. Jinnah. I have described Mr. Jinnah elsewhere as the Mir. Jaffar of his day. I still stick to that description. He is a conscious traitor to his country, and it is foolish to expect him to agree to anything that would be good for the country.

NATIONALIST MUSLIM OPINION

Some people are obsessed with the League's popularity with the Muslim masses. I do not believe that nationalist Muslim opinion can never become a force in the country or that the Congress itself can never win the affection of the Muslim masses or its intelligentsia. The eagerness of those who want to come to terms with Mr. Jinnah at any price is largely induced by their anxiety for the immediate establishment of a national government. I do not think there is any possibility now, short of a national revolution, of any such government being formed in wartime. As for a national revolution, it is not reasonable any more to place it within the range of wartime period.

NEED FOR POSTWAR SHOWDOWN

To my mind, our present task is to prepare for a postwar showdown with the British. All our present actions must suit that future task. I am not suggesting that Gandhiji should not meet

Mr. Jinnah. That business has already gone too far now to cry a halt. It would have been better had no attempt been made in that direction, but now the only thing to do is to go on with it to the bitter end. But in the negotiations Gandhiji should not go beyond agreeing to Muslim majority areas exercising their right of self-determination *after* freedom has been achieved, and the United Indian state has been formed.

Mr. Jinnah would reject that, naturally. But, the negotiations would have fulfilled their purpose if Gandhiji could succeed in getting down on paper the League's exact demands. Then the Congress and patriotic Muslim bodies could go to the Muslim masses both with Gandiji's offers and Mr. Jinnah's demands. That clarification would, I believe give a starting push to nationalist Muslim opinion.

Mr. Rajagopalachari talked the other day of bloodshed and civil war, if Mr. Jinnah was not placated. On a different occasion he told Mr. Savarkar that it was easy to talk of maintaining the unity of the countty through civil war, but would the British allow it ? One may ask Rajaji following his own logic, would the British allow Mr. Jinnah to wage civil war ? To that Rajaji might reply, "No, the British would not do that either, but then we must be prepared to have the British perpetually as our masters."

That exactly is the trouble. Rajaji thinks, probably quite honestly, that unless we placate Mr. Jinnah we can never hope to drive the British out of our midst. I do not agree with him. Looking back at the last 14 years of our national history, it seems to me that the Congress never property prepared for a mast struggle. All its civil disobedience movements, except perhaps the one started in 1930, were haphazardly begun and without much preparation. My short acquaintance with the actual functioning of the Congress in peacetime has led me to believe that the Congress has been losing touch with the masses.

If we leave aside such bodies as AISA and AIVIA which are non-Congress in constitution, or at least non combatant bodies, the Congress has no progamme of work which puts it in daily and constant touch with the people. My experience is that Congress committees devote the greater part of their time and energy to elections—Congress elections and elections to local bodies and provincial legislatures.

PREPARATION FOR STRUGGLE

It is my firm conviction that if the Congress gave itself, say, five years for intensive preparation for a struggle through constructive and educative work among the masses and introduced vigour and energy into its organisation it might be possible to launch a struggle that would sweep all opposition away and bring the British to their knees.

I believe if this were done and further, if an understanding were reached with such bodies as the Muslim Majlis and Jamiat-ul-Ulema, we should succeed in rallying a large section of the Muslim masses and intelligentsia, to the banner of freedom and nationalism. I believe further that if this were done Mr. Jinnah's leadership would be no more than a deflated balloon and the march of events would leave him gasping by the roadside.

Indian nationalism has not become such a spent force that it must lose all hope and commit suicide. Mahatma Gandhi is eveidently impatient. But I do not think he agrees with Mr. Rajagopalachari that we cannot rid ourseleves of British rule without an agreement with Mr. Jinnah. His sturdy faith in Indian nationalism is I believe still as sturdy as it was in August 1942. Therein lies hope—hope that Gandhiji would not, like a despairing man such as Rajaji, who even sorrows over our failure to accept the Cripps' proposals, barter away Indian nationalism by giving Mr. Jinnah all he may want. Gandhiji has still his last fight to fight with the British.

I should add that if I too had despaired of Indian freedom without placating Mr. Jinnah I would not have hesitated to give him all he wanted. Some people are found asking : "Will you have two Indias, both free or one India, salve ?" I do not believe that without division of the country we cannot be free. In fact, knowing Mr. Jinnah and the League, in case we accept Pakistan I fear we shall have both division and slavery.

DIVISION OF INDIA

I shall conclude with a few words about why I oppose the division of the country before we have made a serious attempt to live together in a united and free India. I think such division will solve none of our present problems and will create others more serious

than those existing today. The Muslim states are bound to be British protectorates, the Muslim communal leaders themselves asking for that status. This would mean the existence of a third party on Indian soil, and this will be a source of great worry to the Indian nation.

I have no prejudice against the Muslims. If the political unity of the country was maintained I would be prepared to go the farthest limit to assuage their fears of what is termed as Hindu domination. I love my country and do not care if its 400 millions are Muslims or Christians or Hindus. But I do care whether or not they are free and happy and prosperous. I believe firmly that before long they will be free and happy and not long after prosperous too.

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STATES REORGANISATION—I*

Jayaprakash Narayan

In view of recent developments in the country in regard to reorganisation of states, I feel it my duty to place my humble views before the country. It should be understood that these are entirely my personal views

First of all, I should like to say that these developments have further convinced me of the supreme value of Vinobaji's movement. They have brought out more clearly than ever before the need to concentrate on the fundamental task of converting the minds and hearts and values of the people. It is only when the values that Vinobaji is preaching and seeking to establish in our hearts—the values of a shared and co-operative life—come to be accepted and practised—that the present discords and distempers of society will disappear. The recent disturbances have however shown that Vinoba's movement or rather the entire Sarvodaya or Gandhian view of life, has not made sufficient headway yet to control our actions. But that is no reason to be distracted from the main task : rather it is the more reason for concentrating upon it.

While engaged in this task it becomes necessary sometimes to review and evaluate current events and trends, not with a view to condemn or criticise but in a spirit of helpfulness.

There is no doubt that everyone concerned, including the State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) and the Government of

* Press statement released on November 5, 1956.

India, has tried his best, and in good faith, to solve a rather difficult problem. But looking back—and it is easy to be wise after the event—it has to be admitted that mistakes have been made. It is necessary to take stock and profit from our mistakes.

LACK OF GUIDELINES

It seems to me that we have never been clear about what we wanted and on what basic principles we were endeavouring to reorganise the states. In spite of its praiseworthy labours SRC did not follow any consistent principles and made contradictory recommedations. Practical considerations had no doubt to be taken into account and compromises made, but nevertheless there is a lack of guiding principles in its report.

The same I am afraid is true of the decisions of the Government of India in this matter. Politice, expediency, the interests of pressure groups seem to have played a more decisive role than any clearly defined principles. Or if there were any principles taken into consideration they were contradictory and the emphasis on them varied from time to time. The whole question seems to have been handled in a half hearted manner and without any firm convictions. The result is the utter confusion that we have today.

I do not agree with the view that this question should have been shelved for the next 15 or 20 years. That would be running away from our difficulties. Because they relate to the foundations of a nation's life such questions must always be tackled at the stage when those foundations are being laid. Morever, it is better that this question is settled in the lifetime of the present leaders of the country. Already by the absence of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is being keenly felt by all.

CONCEPT OF A UNION

What principles then should guide our action in this matter ? First of all, I think the conception of India as a Union of States is entirely wrong and contrary to fact and historical development. The analogy neither of USA nor of USSR applies to our country. India is one nation and one country and therefore one state. The parts that were carved out of it to make our neighbouring country were too an integral part of it.

But just as when two brothers cannot live together they decide

to separate, Pakistan was separated from us; and now we have nothing but the utmost goodwill and the friendliest feeling for our separated brothers. The rest of India—despite the partition—remains one nation and one country. The title Union of India is illconceived and meaningless.

From this point of view it would have been quite logical to have had a unitary form of Government. But we have rightly decided against that. India is a vast country, with a vast population and all manner of varieties. A unitary government would be illsuited to India. It would be too far removed from the people, whose participation in it would be a constitutional fiction rather than a reality; it would lead us not to democracy but to some sort of oligarchy. For the proper functioning of democracy a structure of government is required which would allow the utmost opportunity to the people to run their affairs directly. Decentralisation of government has therefore been rightly accepted by us as the pattern to follow. Indeed this pattern will have to be followed more and more everywhere the more democracy progresses.

Accordingly the country should be divided into provinces. I would not call them states. For this division there should be some scientific basis, which should also accord with public opinion.

SIZE OF STATES

One consideration to my mind should be the size of these provinces. They should not be too large, nor too small. If they are too large the people would not be able to experience self-rule. In that case we might as well have a unitary government, which we have rejected. If on the other hand they are too small they would not be economically viable. But they should be small enough for the provincial ministers—and not only district officers—to maintain direct contact with the people, to be easily accessible to them, and to attend to the details of administration and developmental activities. Also the provincial assemblies should be of a manageable size and the constituencies not so large that representatives are unable to maintain personal touch with the people.

Not only from the point of view of administration but also from the point of view of development, small provinces are desirable, for in such compact areas developmental work, receiving

the close and direct attention of the government, can grow faster than in large unwieldy areas. It should also be kept in view that the centre would be in a better position to deal with small provinces than with large. The strength of the centre would be assured that way.

Once the provinces are formed, zonal councils, as proposed by the Prime Minister, may be constituted to co-ordinatd developmental and other activities. These councils may be invested with more than advisory powers.

India is naturally divided into linguistic areas, some of which are small and some large. The major language areas are not too many. People speaking the same language and inhabiting a compact are, though loyal and devoted to the country as a whole, have certain affinities and like to live their lives in their own way. Therefore, what more natural than to make language another important basis on which to carve out the provinces ? Where the linguistic area is too large it may be split so that the province may not be too unwieldy.

LINGUISTIC STATES

I am aware that the Prime Minister has warned against the dangers of linguism and there is cause enough for his warning. But let not the disturbances make us panicky and compel us hastily to retreat from positions taken after due deliberation. All these years language had been tacitly understood to be one basis, at least, of the reorganisation of the states Linguistic hopes have been built on this tacit understanding and it will be dangerous to thwart these hopes at this stage. Moreover there is nothing anti-national, or any danger to national unity, in the demand for linguistic provinces. The Andhras agitated long for a province of their own and when their demand was granted their loyalty to India remaind unimpaired, if indeed it did not increase. What mischief occured and bitterness arose were due to the delay in conceding to their demand.

History shows that language is a very intractable question. It is by no means peculiarly Indian. The history of Central and Eastern Europe bears testimony to the stubbornness of this problem. The Republics of Russia are based broadly on linguistic areas. So are those in Yugoslavia. So it is in many democratic

countries. I therefore wish to warn against suppressing the language question That way lies danger to national unity Let us not invest this natural desire with the epithets of parochialism or treat it as a crime against the nation. The present exaggerations and aberrations of linguism would not have appeared had we frankly accepted the linguistic case and proceeded fairly and squarely to meet it.

BOUNDARY QUESTIONS

In demarcating the provinces boundary questions will naturally arise Boundary areas everywhere are bilingual and with the best of intentions a mistake might be made in drawing a particular line of demarcation. A proper method should be found to solve such boundary disputes. They should never be made issues of political controversy. I feel that had the linguistic demand been frankly accepted and fairly dealt with, and had am agreed method been evolved for solving boundary disputes these disputes would not have assumed their present proportions. I suggest the following procedure in this regard. First, the parties to the dispute should be asked to solve it among themselves. Failing that, the matter should be referred to arbitration, if the parties i.e., the governments concerned agree to abide by the award. In extreme cases a plebiscite might be held and the wishes of the people consulted. Failing all efforts the central government should give the decision and enforce it with all its power. There must be a finality to every dispute. Once the reorganisation of the provinces has been carried out on a satisfactory basis, it should not be a matter of such vital concern what little strip of boundary territory is annexed to what province. We must learn to subordinate the interest of the part to that of the whole.

The case of Bombay city is not that of a boundary dispute. I have always held that Bombay is a part of Maharashtra and I feel that it should have been handed over to the Samyukta Maharashtra with grace and goodwill. The Maharashtrians would then have freely agreed to any special arrangements in view of Bombay's cosmopolitan character and economic status. Even now the Government of India would reconsider its decision. This might appear as yielding to hooliganism in Bombay, which was like the foam crowning the surging seas below. No one should fear the

foam, but it is wise to mind the seas.

BOMBAY TROUBLE

A word about the disturbances in Bombay. There should be a warning to the whole country, but specially to the Maharashtrians themselves. The hooliganism shows to what depths we could descend in this country. It tore the veil off our much-vaunted culture and showed it in all its ugliness. This is not a question of democracy or non-violence but a simple question of culture and of ordinary human decency. Some Maharashtrians atleast showed by their conduct that they were less than human, and it is not clear that they met with the general disapprobation of their community. The few voices which were raised in protest were drowned in the universal how The brave and saintly Appa Saheb Patwardhan had to pay the price for raising his noble voice. The appeal sent to the press by Shri Nathji, a living rishi, never saw light in the Marathi press. Shri Shankerrao Deo, the accepted leader of yesterday, was disowned and driven, to a fast of atonement. Rao Saheb Patwardhan too is atoning for the deeds of his compatriots. But there is no indication yet of the fact that the Maharashtrians have realised the grave injury they have done not only to the Gujaratis, not only to India, but also to themselves and their cause. They are still talking in the language of war and do not seem to realise that even if Bombay is now given to them it is lost to them forever; if they do not try to win back the affection and confidence of their countrymen who made Bombay their home. The task of the hour is not to find other ways of agitation but to find ways of healing the wounds which have been inflicted. Maharashtrians and Gujaratis are limbs of Mother India. How can India live if these wounds continue to bleed and how can Maharashtrians rejoice when India bleeds ?

It is proper here to pay a tribute to the patience, patriotism and nobility of the Gujarati community, who have desisted from retaliatory action not only in Bombay, where they are in a minority, but also in the cities of Gujarat.

A feature of these disturbances everywhere has been the part political parties have played in them. They all profess to follow peaceful methods. In the case of some of them it was a question of failing to stop the whirlwind they had sown. The disturbances

proved the complete failure of their leaders. But in the case of some other parties peaceful professions do not go beyond the lips. In Bombay the communalist acid-bulb technique was once again to the fore. And so was the spirit which presided over Gandhiji's assassination, making a pitiful exhibition of its own view of Hindu culture by garlanding picture of the nation's father and of the Prime Minister with shoes. The only cure for such diseases of the body politic is a healthy growth of the mass mindinculcation in it of human values, the moulding of it towards spontaneously civilised conduct. All men of goodwill each in his own way must devote themselves to this vital task.

BENGAL-BIHAR MERGER

Before I conclude I had better say a word about the Bengal-Bihar merger. In view of the principles I have enunciated above it should be clear that I cannot see any reason to support such a move. Further, the way the proposal originated does not inspire confidence in me. It was more in the nature of an escape from a difficult situation rather than the result of any sudden increase in mutual goodwill. It is remarkable that the Chief Ministers should have first found it impossible to agree upon little strips of territory and then made the startling agreement to merge their states, as meager solved the problem over which at least one of them was prepared to resign. That way we are all merged in one great country. Does that automatically solve all our problems ? The proposal has been described as the *amrita* after the *halahal.* To me it seems to be just plain seawater.

I should like to make it clear that I am not opposed to the merger because I think it would harm Bihar. Indeed if I took a partisan view I would support the proposal, because in the balance it would help Bihar more. But I have no wish to be partisan. I want Bengal to prosper as much as Bihar. I am opposed to the merger proposal because this is not the way to settle disputes, and it goes against what I consider the sound principles of reorganisation of the provinces of our country.

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STATES REORGANISATION–II

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Some time ago, I had occasion to express my views on the problem of states reorganisation. It is a matter of great satisfaction that except for the question of Bombay and some minor boundary disputes this vexed problem has at last been settled. Those responsible for bringing about this settlement deserve our hearty congratulations. That the settlement has not followed any scientific and uniform principles has no doubt to be regretted, but that cannot take away from the joy that every Indian must feel at the amicable settlement of a difficult national problem. There is every reason to hope now that, given patience and mutual goodwill, the remaining problems too would be satisfactorily settled. It is the duty of every Indian—Maharashtrian, Gujarati and other—to create the necessary atmosphere for this consummation. No decision imposed by force on any party can conduce to national well-being. Whatever ultimately happens to Bombay city, Maharashtrians and Gujaratis will have to live together as children of a common mother inhabiting a common national home. Whether they live amicably as brothers or in a state of subdued mutual hostility is any day more important than the ultimate status of Bombay. I am convinced of the justice of Maharashtra's case, but even a good case can be spoiled by bad pleading. The recent events in Bombay have done great harm to the cause of Maharashtra. I am sure however, that in spite of the ugly incidents there is a better appreciation now of the intensity of Maharashtrian feeling and more so of the danger of leaving that feeling to smoulder.

NEED FOR UNITY

This is a time therefore when Maharashtrian leaders should dispassionately take stock of the situation and carefully consider their future course of action. It seems clear to me that any agitation or satyagraha in the present circumstances would be ill-advised and unnecessary. The task of the hour is to unite the bonds that have snapped and to heal the wounds I therefore, most humbly appeal to the people and leaders of Maharashtra to abandon agitation and direct action and bend all their efforts to win back the confidence and goodwill of their Gujarati and other non-Maharashtrian countrymen. I am making this appeal entirely in my personal capacity and with nothing to support me but my faith in the cause of justice and in the good sense of my countrymen and their leaders.

I should like to address a few words to my Gujarati countrymen. I hope they have not misunderstood me or taken me to be partial or prejudiced. I seek the good of Gujarat as much as of Maharashtra. I am also aware of the depth of Gujarati feeling over the incidents in Bombay. But one expects a better understanding from them of the spirit of satyagraha. The misguided acts of a few should not create estrangement between whole communities. Gujaratis have to live with Maharashtrians as fellow-countrymen irrespective of what happens to Bombay. Moreover they are now going to have their own state and must turn all their attention to the tasks of recostruction and consolidation. In this task they must have universal goodwill. The question of Bombay should be viewed in this new perspective now and reduced to its true proportions. The Gujarati fear of the Maharashtrian in the event of Bombay going to Maharashtra is to my mind an unhealthy symptom of linguistic distrust and every effort should be made to overcome it. The best way to do so is to endeavour to remove from the Maharashtrian mind the feeling of having been wronged. The Gujaratis too must have realised the keenness in Maharashtrians for Bombay, and they cannot be unconcerned in the danger to the nation if millions of its citizens are left with a feeling of injustice. In a family when a brother sets his heart on something, and where there is nothing immoral in his demand, it is wise for another brother to yield. In any event the disputed goods remain within the family.

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AN AMBIVALENT POLICY*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

It is saddening beyond words to find the same old policy of confusion and ambivalence being pursued again in the case of Kashmir. Deeds do not seem to correspond with words. Even the words of different spokesmen appear contradictory. On one hand, it is stated that there will be no change in the present status of Kashmir, and on the other that it will eventually be brought in line with the other states of the Union. Again, on one hand, it is emphatically reiterated that we keenly desire friendship with Pakistan, and on the other we deliberately launch a policy that cannot but worsen the already strained relations. I think it is time the government made up its mind. The present policy of indecision and lack of direction and purpose is doing this country incalculable harm.

The question we must squarely face is whether the constitutional integration of Kashmir with India is more important in national interests than friendship with Pakistan and justice to the people of the Valley of Srinagar. Legal technicalities will not provide the answer. What is needed is a mature and realistic reckconing. So far as I can see the disadvantages of the present policy far outweigh the advantages.

NEED FOR EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION

Let me take up first the issue of justice to the people of the

*Press statement released on March 20, 1959.

valley. There has been no credible proof yet that they have freely accepted the legal fact of accession. Constitutional integration has little meaning in the absence of emotional integration. In this age and time it is impossible to hold down by force any sizeable population permanently. If we continue to do this we cannot look the world straight in the face and talk of democracy and justice and peace. Nor on account of his historical circumstances can we shelter behind the internationally recognised limitations of the right of self-determination. Perhaps the most harmful consequences of the policy of forcible integration would be the death-knell of Indian secularism and enthronement of aggressive Hindu communalism. That communalism is bound in the end to turn upon the Hindu community itself and destroy it.

INDO-PAK FRIENDSHIP

As for friendship with Pakistan, let us calculatedly determine how dearly we need that friendship. No country can afford to buy friendship at any cost. So let there be a reckoning of gains and losses. First of all let us be mature enough to understand that if we persist in our present Kashmir policy there can be no friendship with Pakistan. The leaders of that country have not left us in any doubt on that score. If we disbelieve them we shall have only ourselves to blame.

Here is the pricing of Indo-Pak friendship at it appears to me. First, if Pakistan turns hostile, as I fear it would if we persist in the policy of full constitutional intergration, the defence of the country would become a hundred-fold more difficult. Certain parts of it such as Assam, NEFA and Nagaland would be next to impossible to defend. Indo-Pak amity on the other hand would automatically result in large scale disengagement, thus strengthening considerable our defence capability. Our communications too would be automatically strengthened ten-fold. As for the defence of Ladakh, I am sure any amicable settlement of the Kashmir issue would provide for this.

Second, both history and geography destined the subcontinent of India to play a key role in South and Southeast Asia. But as long as India and Pakistan remain at loggerheads India's as also Pakistan's capacity to manoeuvre in this area remains drastically restricted. No initiative taken by India singly can have the same

value and attraction for the countries of this region as a joint Indio-Pakistan move. At present, they cancel out each other, creating a power vacuum which no country but China can fill effectively.

Third, what is true of the Southeast Asia is very largely true of the world. India's posture on the world stage is very considerably determined by its obsession with Kashmir and consequent relations with Pakistan. In the Afro-Asian world this quarrel between the two big Asian countries has led to a heavy cost in prestige, influence and diplomatic effectiveness.

Fourth, there is the great economic damage the quarrel is causing both countries. It is beyond doubt that the development of each would have been much faster had there been co-operation between them in the economic field.

The last, and in some ways the most disastrous consequence of the quarrel, is its human and moral cost and the alienation of peoples it threatens to bring about. If the quarrel continues the Muslims in India and the Hindus in Pakistan will continue to live under the shadow of suspicion and suffer severe spiritual unrest. The danger of communal rioting would be ever present. These conditions are sure to cause mass human degradation to both sides.

The political division of the subcontinent cannot hide the fact that the peoples of India and Pakistan are really *one* people. This is not the first time that India has been divided politically. But there had always been a feeling of oneness and identity among the people divided between kingdoms and republics. Today the Bengalis of West Bengal and East Pakistan are one people, irrespective of religion; so are the Punjabis. In like manner, the Bengalis and Punjabis and Sindhis and Pathans and Jats and Rajputs and other of both countries make up one single Indian people, distinct from all other peoples of the world. States are passing shows, but the people are eternal. I would therefore consider this alienation of the people of India and Pakistan from one another to be the most disastrous consequence of the present quarrel.

This briefly is the balance sheet as I see it. Let logic and reason rather than childish emotion guide the debate and the ultimate decision.

KASHMIR QUESTION

I am aware that settlement of the Kashmir issue would not in itself establish firm Indo-Pak friendship, but it would certainly remove the greatest obstacle to it and create the necessary psychological conditions. I am also aware that friendship is not one sided. But I am convinced that friendship is as precious for Pakistan as for India and the Pakistanis will be found to be as keen for it as we persuade ourselves to be.

A last word to the leaders of the government. At this critical moment in the country's life it is their duty to lead and not be led. The crippling fear of public opinion and party rank and file is only a reflection of the leadership's own weakness and division. It is for the leaders to shaps public opinion and educate the back-benchers. If they fail in this they will do a disservice to the country in this hour of decision.

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OUR GREAT OPPORTUNITY IN KASHMIR

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

The story of Kashmir is an account of confused aims, unsure methods, insincere ideals. From the beginning Kashmir has been the Indian Prime Minister's concern. Yet when Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed from the prime ministership of the state and detained Mr. Nehru came to know of the event just as any other Indian citizen did. That is only one example of the incredible manner in which the Kashmir question has been handled. The present ballyhoo over Sheikh Abdullah's statements raises the question whether the old story is not going to be repeated again.

After 11 years of dilly-dallying the Sheikh has been released at last. But again there seems to be no well-thoughtout policy behind this belated decisson. Surprise and pain have been expressed at Sheikh Saheb's statements. Unless the gentlemen concerned have deliberately hidden their heads in the sand they could have saved themselves these emotional upsets. Sheikh Abdullah has said nothing that was not expected from him. Happily the one sane voice in the ruling party is that of the Prime Minister himslf.

What after all is the substance of Sheikh Abdullah's statements ? That the future of Kashmir has to be decided by the people of Kashmir and that this must be done in such a manner that the dispute about it between India and Pakistan ends amicably. With a little imagination it was possible to see that this clear and principled stand of the Kashmir leader opened for India

wonderful opportunity which could be exploited to the advantage of all concerned. What is actually happening however is a parrot like reiteration of slogans which carry no conviction in dispassionate quarters.

One of these slogans is that the accession of Kashmir to India is final and irrevocable. The Sheikh has questioned, that and it is for impartial lawyers to decide the issue. But, the vital point to keep in mind is that it is not by legal advocacy that a human problem like that of Kashmir can ever be settled. Indeed it was such a realisation that prompted the original promise of the Prime Minister to ascertain the wishes of the people.

At this point two further slogans are raised : the people of Kashmir have already expressed their will at three general elections, if the people of Kashmir are allowed to express their will this would be the beginning of the end of the Indian nation.

Both to my mind are baseless slogans. The elections in Kashmir after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest were neither fair nor free. If that has to be disproved, it can be done by an impartial inquiry and not just by official assertions. Delhi seems to believe that it can establish any fact it pleases by auto-suggestion.

I may be lacking in patriotism or other virtues, but it has always seemed to me to be a lie to say that the people of Kashmir had already decided to integrate with India. They might do so, but have not done so yet. Apart from the quality of the elections. the future of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was never made an electoral issue at any of them If further proof was needed it has come in the form of Sheikh Abdullah's emphatic views and he, to put it at the least, is as representative of the people as any other Kashmiri leader.

Lastly, if we are so sure of the verdict of the people, why are we so opposed to giving them another opportunity to reiterate it ? The answer is that this would start the process of disintegration of the country. Few sillier things have been said in the course of this controversy than this. The assumption behind the argument is that the Indian states are held together by force and not by the sentiment of a common nationality. This is an assumption that makes a mockery of the Indian nation and a tyrant of the Indian state.

Threats have been held out that should Sheikh Abdullah misbehave the law would take its course. The law has taken its

course. for 11 years and the issue remains unsettled. It is not likely to achieve more in future. It is remarkable how the freedom fighters of yesterday begin so easily to imitate the language of the imperialists.

The last and final slogans raised in the ballyhoo is that there is no Kashmir question at all and that if there was one at any time it has been settled once for all. Kashmir is a part of India and that is a fact of history, they say. That I think is the worst form of autho-suggestion.

The slogan-raisers forget that almost half the State of Jammu and Kashmir is under the occupation of Pakistan. Has this been accepted as a settled fact ? If so, when and where ? If not, how is the issue of Kashmir settled except in the private thoughts of those who believe that "we shall keep what we have" and "they shall keep what they have" ?

Secondly, the issue is still pending before the Security Council and UN observers are still posted in Kashmir. Thirdly, here is a leader of the stature of Sheikh Abdullah who clearly states that the issue has still to be settled.

Therefore, as a humble servant of this country, I plead earnestly that instead of trying to take shelter in a fool's paradise of our own making let us have the courage to face facts and deal with them on the basis of the ideals and fundamental principles which guided our freedom movement. After all Sheikh Abdullah has not said anything that shuts the door on a reasoned and amicable settlement. All he has done is to envisage the unity and integrity of the original State of Jammu and Kashmir and ascertaining the wishes of the people of the reunited state in a manner to be agreed upon. He has indicated that a plebiscite need not be the only way of doing so and has mentioned free and fair elections as another. This is not a stand which does not provide a meeting ground for India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir.

A GROVE MISTAKE

It was encouraging to find that the Prime Minister boldly affirmed in his reply to the foreign affairs debate his faith in Indo-Pakistani friendship, envisaging even some kind of a constitutional tie, and was generous enough to concede that mistakes had been made by both sides. Recent events have proved that the partition

of India was a grave mistake and has failed to solve any problem. There is however now the incontestable fact of two sovereign nations.

But at the same time the history of the post-independence years has proved another incontestable fact, namely that neither India nor Pakistan can live and grow unless there is friendship and co-operation between them. The lack of such relations has among other things upset the power balance in South and Southeast Asia, depriving the subcontinent of the role which history and geography had destined it to play. The result was a tilt of the balance in favour of China, a very unhealthy state of affairs. The Kashmir question has to be viewed in this broad perspective.

The question whether settlement of the problem would establish friendship between India and Pakistan may be debated, but it cannot be denied that this would take us a long way towards that goal, as well as create international conditions that would necessarily promote that friendship. I fervently hope that our leaders have the vision and statesmanship that this historic moment demands.

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THE NEED TO RETHINK

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

My recent article on Kashmir has provoked a rather fierce controversy. That is good, because after the emotional catharsis tempers should cool down, allowing for a more reasoned approach to a question that has plagued the subcontinent for the last 17 years. There is urgent need for rethinking on this question, and all I did in my article was to plead for this. It is to be regretted therefore, that most of those who thought it necessary to preach angry sermons to me on patriotism refused to look squarely at the truths I had drawn attention to.

Yet I have no desire to prolong this controvery, because I believe it would help if everybody concerned kept his own counsel for a while. But in recent days there have been some amazing statements revealing a dangerous state of mind. It seems necessary to deal briefly with some of these matters which cause anxiety and point to a constructive way out if possible.

When I wrote about the ballyhoo in my article, I little imagined that there had been such a vast, organised attempt to work up a state of mind which was hysterical and closed to reason and intolerance to a violent degree of all dissent. The public temper in Delhi at the time of Sheikh Abdullah's arrival reminded one of the days when the Father of the Nation was sacrificed at the altar of a similar synthetic hysteria. Regrettably Parliament itself helped to create that spirit of violent intolerance : recall—to give only one example—the shouting down of Mr. Frank

Anthony.

A rather mortifying example of the mental state of some members of Parliament was provided by Mr. A.P. Jain, president of the UP Congress and one time Union minister. He is reported to have said in New Delhi that there were men who held a different opinion from mine on Kashmir who had voluntarily imposed upon themselves "extreme restraint," but that "if provocations of the type that Mr. Narayan is making continue their patience might be exhausted."

I have no idea what Mr. Jain means by that threat; perhaps he and his friends would have me put away in prison. Personally I would welcome that as an opportunity to snatch some rest and do some reading. But, the crucial point to ponder is that irate young men go about muttering about assassination if a person in Mr. Jain's position utters threats in this manner ?

The pity is that when I referred to this mass hysteria at a public meeting in New Delhi some friends in the Rajya Sabha turned it into an issue of personal security—I am in no need of protection—rather than give serious thought to the dangers of the situation that had developed May I say with due respect that in order to remedy the situation members of Parliament might well begin by practising a little more patience and tolerance themselves ?

IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN VALUES

Of all the amazing statements made in the course of this controversy the one by 27 Congress MPs (including the secretary of the Congress Party and other important members) easily takes the prize. First, there was the actounding assertion of the primacy of law over moral and human values. As legislators the MPs should know the nature and limitations of law as they are making and unmaking laws, even amending the constitution all the time. In human affairs law no doubt has an important role to play, but it has its limits. Morality and human values transcend the limits of law and take precedence over it.

Nor is it a question of "anyone's personal views of what is moral." It is not at all difficult to identify what civilization in this age considers moral and human Mahatma Gandhi devoted his whole life to spiritualise politics. It is sad to find that in a decade

and a half leaders—one hopes their number is limited—of the organisation he built have come to sneer openly at morality and humanism.

Coming to Kashmir, this is how they authoritatively summed up the position : "You can no more talk of self-determination in the case of Kashmir than in the case of, say, Bombay or Bihar." Further on they said : "After the Americans attained independence was any state allowed to exercise the so-called right of self-determination ? Surely Congress MPs know better. Then why this deliberate obfuscation ? Is the answer far to find ?

Let the public, which has a proverbially short memory, should be led to believe that the idea of self-determination for Kashmir was a creation of Jayaprakash Narayan and his ilk, let me try to put the record straight When partition was agreed upon it was decided that what was known as British India would be divided according to Muslim majority and Hindu-majority areas without a referendum and that in princely India the princes would have the option to accede to India or Pakistan. Thus, there was no question of any referendum in Bihar or Bombay.

HISTORY OF PARTITION

As to the princely states, the accession of the princes was to be final. So when Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir acceded to India that should have set the matter beyond doubt for all time, as indeed in strict law it actually did. But there was a snag : the accession had to be accepted. And it was precisely at that point that the idea of a referendum or self-determination in regard to Kashmir was injected into the course of events. After accepting the Instrument of Accession on October 27, 1947, Lord Louis Mountbatten, wrote the same day to the Maharaja as follows : "In the special circumstances mentioned by Your Highness, my Government have decided to accept the accession of Kashmir State to the Dominion of India. Consistently with their policy that, in the case of any state where the issue of accession has been the subject of dispute, the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the state, it is my Government's wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and her soil cleared of the invader, the question of the state's accession should be settled by a reference to

the people."

A few days later (November 2, 1947) Mr. Nehru underlined in a broadcast the assurance given by the Governor-General in these clear words : "We decided to accept this accession and to send troops by air, but we made a condition that the accession would have to be considered by the people of Kashmir later when peace and order were established. We were anxious not to finalise anything in a moment of crisis and without the fullest opportunity to the people of Kashmir to have their say. It was for them ultimately to decade."

> "And here let me make clear that it has been our policy all along that where there is a dispute about the accession of a state to either dominion the decision must be made by the people of that state. It was in accordance with this policy that we added a proviso to the Instrument of Accession of Kashmir."

Latter in the same broadcast the Prime Minister declared to all the world : "We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given, and the Maharaja has supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not, and cannot, back out of it. We are prepared when peace and law and order have been established to have a referendum held under international auspices like the United Nations. We want it to be a fair and just reference to the people and we shall accept their verdict. I can imagine no fairer and juster offier."

In view of this crystal clear position it is amazing that such frantic efforts should be made to cloud the issue.

At this point it might help to clarify matters to consider another variation of the theme, though this was not the theme of the 27 MPs. Briefly it is this : true, there was a provisio to the Instrument of Accession, but that has already been given effect to and there is nothing further to the done about it. The proviso was carried out, it is said, when the Kashmir Constituent Assembly adopted in 1956 a constitution which declared that "the State of Jammu and Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of India." That was three year after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest, but that may not be considered very important. The really important point is

that a decision of the Constituent Assembly cannot be equated with a referendum, which the Prime Minister had solemnly pledged.

Statements of Sheikh Abdullah are bandied about to prove that he himself had accepted accession. But there never was any question about this. After the Maharaja's legal act of accession, the Sheikh and the National Conference endorsed and explicity accepted accession and on many subsequent occasions their accepted was reiterated. All this is incontestable, the provsio remained and had to take effect. Neither the National Conference nor Sheikh Abdullah could take the place of the people of Kashmir, whose will had to be ascertained and not the Sheikh's or that of the National Conference.

Still another argument is that since Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO and USA supplied it with arms and other things happened the situation became so transformed that the offer of a referendum stood no longer. But it is forgotten that it was not to Pakistan that the offer or pledge was given but to the people of Kashmir. There is no justification for punishing the Kashmiris for Pakistan's actions.

In view of all this it appears to me that the right and constructive approach is not to deny Kashmir the right to self-determination or to assert that the right has already been exercised, but to show rationally how impractical and imprudent it would be to exercise that right now.

The following considerations might be put forward : First, there is the hard fact of aggression by Pakistan, which it shows no intention of vacating; second, a referendum might have serious consequences for the minorities both in India and Pakistan; third, a referendum might lead to further disintegration of the State of Jammu and Kashmir; fourth, the effect of the foregoing would have serious consequences for India's defence. There may be other factors, but these four are weighty and reasonable and neither Sheikh Abdullah nor any other Kashmir leader would brush them aside because they are as much concerned with India's good as with that of Kashmir.

SEARCH FOR SETTLEMENT

My humble plea is that we put aside all this heated controversy about the accession having been final and irrevocable and sit

down with the Sheikh and discuss practical ways of achieving a settlement. If according to us the only way is for Sheikh Abdullah to accept the finality and irrevocability of accession we might as well send him back to prison; he will never agree to that position. But to find a mutually acceptable solution it is not necessary for either side to give up its position. The important thing is for each to understand that merely by asserting one's own position and sticking to it the problem is not solved. No matter how aggressively we affirm that Kashmir's accession to India is final and irrevocable the world does not accept it, the "Azad Kashmir" area remains under Pakistan, the ceasefire line remains, the two armies remain facing each other, the minorities in both India and Pakistan continue to live in fear, discontent in Kashmir simmers and might have to be put down by force. So what have we gained or hope to gain in the future, by our insistent unilateral assertion ? On the other hand if Sheikh Abdullah continues to press for the right of self-determination and circumstances do not permit it to be exercised what good does it do to him or anybody else ?

So let each hold on to his position, but put it aside and get down to brass tacks to find a practical solution. Let it be recalled that there were three referendums in Alsace-Lorraine and now who cares to whom it belongs ?

I do not think anybody knows what the solution can be. Yet a few positive things might be stated about it. One, that must be an honest desire on all sides to find a solution. Two, it should be remembered, as an English statesman said, that nothing is settled unless it is settled right. Of course it is not easy to know what is right in a complicated situation, but one test may be that it gives satisfaction to all concerned. Therefore, the third point about the solution is that it must be such as to satisfy India, the people of Kashmir and Pakistan.

SHEIKH'S STAND

Sheikh Abdullah's insistent stress on Indo-Pak understanding as a part of any solution of the Kashmir question has irked Indian public opinion and many have read into it his predilection for Pakistan. This, however, is a complete misreading. Sheikh Abdullah sees, as everyone else should, that there could be no settlement if Pakistan were not a party to it. The Kashmir question came into

being on account of Pakistan and India made it a party to the dispute at the U.N. Apart from Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah also sees that the future of both India and Pakistan depends upon whether they are friends or enemies.

This is a view that will not be seriously contested in this country, and it has the support of no less a person than the Prime Minister. In a courageous and statesman like speech in the Lok Sabha, in reply to the foreign affairs debate, Mr. Nehru was reported to have said that "he would have hoped that India and Pakistan would come together closer, even constitutionally, but that would annoy the Pakistan authorities." So he would content himself to declare ; "There is no other way for us except to live in peace." When it is recalled that the speech was made at a time of intense communal feeling its courage and wisdom become still more impressive.

I might remark here parenthetically—though this is not the place for it—that the Prime Minister's speech was equally remarkable for its responsive approach to the inquiry made by the Prime Minister of Ceylon. I should add however that it is not for China to make a "proper approach" to us as the Prime Minister said. Now that both sides have been sounded, it is for the mediators, the Six Colombo Conference powers, to make the proposal in a formal manner to both governments. That would amount to a mutually agreed amendment of the original Colombo proposals and enable India and China to meet at the conference table.

But to return to Indo-Pakistan relations and Kashmir. The reference by the Prime Minister to some kind of constitutional link between the two countries is particularly interesting in the present context. And it need not be assumed that Pakistan would always oppose such an idea. After all every country is concerned about its security and economic development. Can there be any doubt that a constitutional link between India and Pakistan would go a long way to guarantee their security as well as economic progress ? Moreover the fact that Sheikh Abdullah is also thinking on similar lines introduces a fresh element of hope into the situation. So if rigid positions are kept out of the way there is every hope that a constructive approach will be agreed upon that might lead ultimately to a satution at once satisfying to India, Kashmir and Pakistan. Here is a task of statesmanship of the highest order.

HINDU COMMUNALISM

Before concluding I wish to take a look at our secularism in relation to Kashmir. Apart from other considerations Kashmir is deemed of great value to us because we wish to hold it up as an example of our secularism. I wonder if the spokesmen of secularism are aware of the irony of the present situation. The same Kashmir that is supposed to be an example of Indian secularism has occasioned a nasty upsurge of Hindu communalism. It is not easy to discern this process because it is happening under the cover of nationalism. India being a Hindu-majority country, it is not difficult, as has been remarked by many observers, for Hindu communalism to trot out in the garb of Indian nationalism. Therefore, it is all the more urgent for those who believe in a truly secular and composite nationalism to be on their guard.

What is meant by Kashmir being an example of Indian secularism ? It means I believe that the people of India have given such proof of their noncommunal outlook that the Muslims of Kashmir, even though they are in a majority there, have freely decided to live with India, which is a Hindu-majority but secular country, rather than with Pakistan, which has a Muslim majority but is an Islamic state. But suppose we had to keep the Muslims of Kashmir within India by force. Would that also be an example of our secularism ? The very question exposes its absurdity. And yet how wide-spread is the mentality today that in order to defend the secular basis of our nation we must keep Kashmir, if necessary by force, within the Indian Union !

I, therefore, wish most seriously to plead with the Prime Minister, the congress president and other Congress leaders to look carefully at the cancerous process that is taking place within their party. As things are moving there will soon be little to choose at least in this matter between the Congress and the Jana Sangh. Shallow and timid Congressmen feel that the Jana Sangh is stealing their thunder. But by and large people's minds are sound, and they would really round Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—as they have always known him –if he were to give a clear and bold lead. And so would all the faint-hearted Congressmen who are eager to ride to victory on the communal wave. If some such event does not happen. I am afraid the secular base of our nation will be vitally damaged.

to be more and more emphasised in human relations.

Asoka's adjuration of war as state policy was the most striking example of this spiritual growth. Gradually the oneness of all life came to be realised and many extended the *dharma* of non-killing to all living things. But even those who could not rise to that high level—and they were perhaps, as they still are, the majority—decided as a token of their reverence for life as such to desist from killing their most useful animal, the cow. There was no blind superstition in that but rational self-denial in order to bear witness to the oneness of life. The sacredness of the cow symbolised the sacredness of life itself.

DANGEROUS SUPERSITION

In these days of degeneration and decay of Hinduism, the sacredness of the cow has, however, become a meaning-less and therefore dangerous superstition which sometimes leads misguided Hindus to the wilful and wanton destruction of the most valuable and sacred form of life on this earth, namely, human life. If we Hindus understood the true meaning of the sacredness of the cow we would learn to be compassionate towards every living thing, but more so towards man.

The Sitamarhi flare-up points to the need for many things such as better organisation of the forces of non-violence, but it highlights more than anything else the need for the Hindu religion to purge itself of the dross and salvage the gold that is hidden beneath the heavy load of impurities.

National reconstruction is not only a political or economic affair. Its mainsprings are religious and spiritual reconstruction. This requires courage and the spirit of spiritual adventure which India witnessed in the age of the Upanishads and in that of Buddha and Mahavir. Only the future can tell whether Hinduism, in spite of its gread age, has the vitality for the great creative role that it has been called upon to play by history.

PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT

The next point that the Sitamarhi incidents highlighted was that no matter what our religious susceptibilities we must learn to behave as civilised human beings and to settle our disputes peacefully.

In other words the forces and habits of non-violence must be cultivated and strengthened. The task has two aspects, incluca-tion of non-violence among the people and rooting out of the causes of violence in economic, political and social life; and dealing with outbreaks of violence in a non-violent manner. The first task may be summed up as building up Sarvodaya, a non-violent society, which Vinobaji's movement is trying to accomplish. The second task again is being tackled by Vinobaji's programme for a Shanti Sena.

At present whenever these is violence the forces of superior violence, represented by the police and the army, are called up to quell disturbances. No one can object to this, because at present there is no alternative. But, it should be understood that when superior violence subdues weaker violence this is no victory for peace but a victory for violence, which is the negation of peace. We have to learn how to enforce peace with the forces of peace. Then only can we speak of having established peace.

It is to achieve this noble task that Vinobaji has revived Gandhiji's idea of a Shanti Sena and is trying to put it into practice.

The public would have noticed that in Bihar at least the Sitamarhi riots were the first occasion when the Shanti Sena went into action under the leadership of a veteran Gandhian of this state, Shri Baidyanath Chaudhary, who was ably assisted by Shri Dwarako Sundarani of Vinobaji's Samanwaya Ashram at Bodh Gaya. Soon other Shanti-sainiks and Bhoodan and Khadi Gramodyog Sangh workers rushed to the area.

SHANTISAINIKS

In the days before Swaraj Congress workers used to function as Shantisainiks on all such occasion. But after Swaraj the state "forces of law and order" have been almost the sole agencies working to maintain peace. Vinobaji's Santi Sena has added a new factor, the moral and social possibilities of which are unlimited.

The experience gathered by the Shantisainiks in Sitamarhi and Bairgania will help us plan and develop our future work.

Before I conclude, may I say a word to the authorities. Their natural inclination would be to seek out the wrong-doers and punish

them. While I grant that the requirements of the law must be fulfilled let it not be forgotten that the real caulprit is superstition and communal ill-will on both sides. If this is true, as I am sure it is, legal reprisals and punishments are poor remedies. The true remedy is education and enlightenment and promotion of mutual trust and co-operation. This is not a task that the police and magistracy can accomplish. This is the job of public-spirited and enlightened citizens, including workers of political parties, but above all of Gandhian constructive or Sarvodaya workers. The most authority can do is to see that vindictiveness does not vitiate justice and there is no delay, favouritism nor corruption in the distribution of relief. The rest is the work of men of goodwill of all communities, persuasions and organisations.

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THE TASK AHEAD*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Today is Martyr's Day. It was on this day 18 years ago that the Father of the Nation was martyred in the cause of communal harmony and harmony between India and Pakistan. Gandhiji as you know was against partition, but he acquiesced in it because he was unwilling to disown and range himself against the Congress "High Command," which to his great sorrow had made up its mind to defy the leader it had followed for a quarter-century.

But at the same time he had decided to strain his nerves to heal the wounds of that tragic event and to bring the estranged and separated brothers together to live in friendship and co-operation. He even dared to dream of creating conditions in which the millions of refugees could return to their original homes. But to our eternal shame and sorrow he was not allowed to realise his dream.

Since 1948, this day has been observed every year as Martyr's Day. The event has however, become just one of the numerous national ceremonies in which our country abounds, without inducing any serious thought or action on behalf of the cause for which Gandhiji gave his life. The result, until a few weeks ago, was that their was a permanent state of tension between the two countries, leading sometimes to open hostility and frequent communal riots in both.

*Speech at the Council for Communal Harmony Calcutta, on January 31, 1965.

The Council for Communal Harmony was born out of one such riot in Calcutta, and during its brief span of life it has done remarkably well. A year ago in this very hall I had the privilege of addressing the first conference of the council. That was a time when it was not very popular, to say the least, to work of Hindu-Muslim harmony and Indo-Pak friendship. Mrs. Maitreyi Devi and her co-workers should be congratulated for the courage and persistence with which they have pursued their patriotic and human goal in spite of all manner of misunderstanding even calumny.

A great deal has happened in the Indian sub-continent since the last conference. There were moments in this period when from the point of view of Hindu-Muslim relations, the situation had turned truly dismal. Fortunately there has been a miraculous transformation in the psychological climate in both sister-countries of the sub-continent. Only till the other day both nations were seized with intense feelings of hate and hostility and suddenly now their is calm and an upsurge of feelings of freindship and hope.

The three authors of this miracle, the late Prime Minister Shastri, President Ayub khan and Chairman Kosygin, deserve the deepest gratitude of the sixty crores, of people of the sub-continent. Of the three it was Mr. Shastri particularly who has proved to be a *messiah* of peace for the people of this country. It was due to his brilliant leadership in war and peace and to his remarkable gift for establishing rapport with the minds and hearts of the people and above all his martyrdom, that there is now visible in this country a really serious concern for reaching a lasting friendship and understanding with Pakistan.

THE TASK AHEAD

For the members of this council and for all those who have worked and craved for communal harmony the present is indeed a time for rejoicing. But we would be making a great mistake if we assumed that all was well on the communal front and there was nothing further to do. A similar mistake was made in regard to national integration at the time to the Chinese attack, but it did not take long for the mistake to be discovered. The tasks of communal harmony and national integration, which are interrelated, have still to be accomplished and they cannot be accomplished except through ceaseless vigilence and endeavour.

While it was a matter of deep gratification that no communal incidents took place in the recent Indo-Pak conflict either in India or in East Pakistan, it cannot be denied that the same across the border, that there was uneasy communal feeling. Most Hindus looked with suspicion at their Muslim neighbours and most Muslims lived in anxiety and even in fear. Any mischievous *agent provocateur's* could have unleashed communal violence at a suitable moment.

That such a tragedy did not occur was not due so much to trust and harmony between the two major communities as to the fact that even those elements which are normally behind such incidents had perhaps instinctively felt that communal disturbances might prejudice the war effort. But now that the war has ended and the battle for peace begun such elements may consider themselves freed from self-restraint. History has shown that it is for more difficult to make peace than to make war. Peace, if it is to be fair and lasting, must do justice to both sides.

This means that both sides should be prepared for concessions and mutual adjustments. It is just because of this that narrow-minded ultras find it convenient to throw a spanner into the works and wreck peace-making. The *agent provocateurs* come into their own at such times. Therefore there should be no complacency on the part of those who are working for communal harmony and national integration. Taking full advantage of the current friendly Indo-Pak feelings, the council and others who share its vision must redouble their efforts.

NATIONAL INTEGRATION CONFERENCE

Since the National Integration Conference of 1961, various committees and bodies have studied various aspects of national integration, emotional integration, etc. The results of these studies, so prematurely halted, should be brought together and widely publicised. Official and non-official agencies should be stimulated to propagate and put them into practice; and there should be co-ordination between both types of agencies. The study of the problems involved should be resumed. Fortunately the National Gandhi Centenary Communittee has set up a committee to work on the question of national integration, of which communal harmony is a vital part.

I shall conclude these brief remarks with a few suggestions—none of them new—for promotion of communal harmony. Hindus and Muslims have lived together side by side as neighbours in town and village for centures. Yet there is in each of them an almost complete ignorance of the religion of the other. Ignorance is as you know the mother of every kind of prejudice and of much mischief. If is a serious defect of education in this country that members of one community do not know the beliefs and practices of others with whom they live their daily lives.

To correct this a deliberate effort should be made through our schools to create better understanding in this respect. If the young come to understand one another a firm foundation would have been laid of communal harmony and national integration. Appropriate literature should be produced for the purpose. Special efforts should be made to bring together the youth of different communities through common hostels, work camps, joint relief work, excursions, sports, cultural programmes, such as dramas shows, etc.

At the people's level I would suggest promotion of joint participation in festivals, socials, community activities and similar popular functions.

One serious cause of latent ill-will between the communities, particularly between Hindus and Muslims, is prejudiced writing of Indian history. Events and personalities of history have been presented in such form that misunderstanding and resultant ill-will tend to be refreshed from generation to generation. Objective, unprejudiced rewriting of Indian history is to my mind an essential step towards communal harmony.

In many instances the contributory factors of communal tension and violence are of economic and social character. For instance, in the last riots in Orissa and Bihar around Rourkela and Jamshedpur the fact that most of the local distilleries were owned by Muslims became a contributing factor. Non-Muslim competitors found it profitable to fan the riots. In the Adivasi areas likewise the fact that Muslim contractors and shopkeepers were in the habit of taking a number of "wives" from among the tribals and had failed to give them their rightlful legal or social status had created latent hostility against them and provided a motive for revenge.

ALIGARH UNIVERSITY

The fact that many graduates of Aligarh University have gone to Pakistan is sometimes put forward as evidence of the lack of patriotism in a section of the Muslim intelligentsia. This leads to tension between the communities. But few take the trouble to go deep into the question. The fact is that while in government service educated Muslims get their due shere of employment, if not more, Indian business homes and other private employers generally are reluctant to admit them. The remedy lies in a rational solution rather than creation of suspicion and tension.

In view of this situation it is necessary to make scientific studies to different situations of communal tension, identify the causes and remove them from the root. This would require a far more rational approach to the problem than has been in evidenee so far.

One last word and I have finished. The Hindu being the much large community the responsibility for winning the confidence of the minority communities rests squarely on them. I am afraid the Hindu community does not always recognise this. May one hope that Shastriji's martyrdom and the Tashkant spirit will make us Hindus more conscious of our responsibility ?

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A GRAVE DISEASE

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

I feel privileged to be associated with this vital movement for national unity by combating the divisive and reactionary forces of communalism, obscurantism and bigotry.

The present year and the last have been particularly bad in all three respects of communalism, obscurantism and bigotry-three faces of the same evil. There were in 1967 and 1968 many communal riots, burning alive of a Harijan and not the least, a case of human sacrifice. These incident were a warning and a symptom; a symptom of a serious diseases which afflicts the nation and a warning whose neglect will spell national disaster. The posters put up here eloquently proclaim this warning : communalism caused partition : communalism assassinated the Father of the Nation. Recent posters which appeared in the city bore witness to the fact that the assassin's spirit was still alive and abroad.

Like the two worlds of the rich and poor, we also have the world of the enlightened and amancipated elite and the other of the educated and uneducated millions who are prisoners of prejudice, superstition and ignorance. But while one may understand that the rich will keep their distance from the poor, it is difficult to comprehend why the enlightened have abdicated from their clear duty and felt no commiment to the battle against the forces of darkness. One of the most deplorable features of the national scene is this failure of the elite to play their role in the renaissance of

Indian enlightenment. The result is that even the seats of high learning are being desecrated by communalism and bigotry.

POLITICAL PARTIES

All the political parties in India except a very few profess their faith in secularism. But while they have been fighting all the time for all kinds of real or imagined causes, the cause of secularism, the foundation of this nation, has gone by default. It was, and the bounden duty of the secular political parties to launch a vigorous mass compaign of popular education in the meaning and practice of secularism. Not only have they failed to do so but some of them, by adopting a policy of accommodation towards the communal-minded parties just for a share in political power, have even helped spread communalism among the people.

The picture is no brighter when one turns to the trade union movement, which is so resonant which slogans of class solidarity and the rest I personally witnessed the debacle of these high-sounding ideologies in the last riots in Jamshedpur. Therefore, unless the political parties appreciate the power of communalism and pluck up enough courage to fight it, they will either have to turn communal themselves or be buried under the weight of communal forces.

There is only one reason for the pusillanimity of the political parties. It is for easier to gather the votes of any community by exciting communal passions and ambitions, by highlighting communal issues, by inventing a communal bogey. Conversely, it is difficult to collect votes by rational appeal. It is for this reason that the forces of communalism, casteism, separatism, linguism, regionlism have been making long strides forward. Unless the secular political parties take courage and live up to their professions and make common cause against the forces of disruption and division the future is pretty dark.

In these circumstances, the work of such bodies as the Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee of Delhi, the Secular Farum of Bombay, the Council for Communal Harmony of Calcutta are like burning torches in the night. May they each light a thousand other torches like themselves.

SEVERAL VARIETIES

Communities being of different kinds, communalism has many varieties. Of them, religious communalism is the most pernicious because it is clothed with divine sanction and is able to exploit deep religious sentiments. It is, however, not the fault of religion that it allows itself to be exploited by communalism. *The arch culprit here is politics, followed closely by economics. Communalism has never been known to serve any religious purpose : it always has a political, economic or social motivation.* No religion sanctions the loot murder, rape, arson and worse that are the common feautures of all communal riots. But there is no doubt that every such riot adds to the popularity of one or another communal party of group and strengthens the economic interests—in trade, manufacture, moneylending, etc.—of one religious community or another.

This does not mean that communalism has no roots in religion : *but it is false religion that nurses communalism within its bosom.* The analytical history of religions shows that the dross that got compounded with the gold of the original truth of the seer or the prophet was itself the product of political-economic-social exploitation of religion. This should be a warning to all those who have deep and genuine faith in their religion. Religion to me is a lifegiving source which relates me to the unknown force that the ultimate reality. I draw inner strength from this relationship. howsoever, vaguely I might comprehend it. What makes me a Hindu, which I am proud to be, is the fact that my understanding intimation of the ultimate reality is determined basically by the guidance of the ancient Indian seers and spiritual teachers. Secondarily, my identity as a Hindu is determined by my adherence to certain outward forms of religious worship enjoined by Hindu society in my area of the country. Others likewise might follow other prophets and other ways of worship. There is nothing in all this to breed hatred and violence and communal conflict.

HINDU COMMUNALISM

India being a country of many religions, almost every religious community has its own brand of communalism. They are all pernicious, but Hindu communalism is more pernicious than the

others. One reason is that because the Hindus constitute a great majority of the population of India. Hindu communalism can easily masquerade as Indian nationalism and denounce all opposition to it as being anti-national.

Some like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) might do it openly by identifying the Indian nation with Hindu Rashtra, others might do it more subtly. But in every case, such identification is pregnant with national disintegration, because members of the other communities can never accept the position of second-class citizens. Such a situation therefore has in it the seeds of perpetual conflict and ultimate disruption.

Those who attempt to equate India with Hindus and Indian history with Hindu history are only detracting from the greatness of India and the glory of Indian history and civilisation Such persons, paradoxical though this may seem, are in reality the enemies of Hinduism itself and of the Hindus. Not only do they degrade the noble religion and destroy its catholicity and spirit of tolerance and harmony, but they also weaken and sunder the fabric of the nation, of which the Hindus form such a vast majority.

There is another sense in which the Hindu communalists are endangering the very community of which the claim to be the champions. Because of the divisions within Hindu society of unequal castes and still more unequal out-castes, the spirit of communalism, once aroused and yoked to the wagon of politics, will be bound to set up, as indeed it has begun to do already, one combination of castes against another combination and a combination of the outcastes against them all.

RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH

Regarding the RSS there are two remarks I wish to make. When the Sangh was under a shadow after Gandiji's murder there were many protestation about its being entirely a cultural organisation. But apparently emboldened by the timidity of the secular forces it has thrown its veil away and has emerged as the real power behind and controller of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The secular protestations of the Jana Sangh will never be taken seriously unless it cuts the bonds which tie it so firmly to the RSS machine. Nor can the RSS be treated as a cultural organisation so long as it remains the mentor and effective manipulator of a political party.

The other remark I wish to address to the RSS itself. If it has the good of India at heart it should convert itself from a narrow-minded Hindu organisation to a broad-based Indian organisation and admit into its ranks the young from all communities and train them, as they are capable of doing, to be disciplined, loyal and united citizens of India. They would earn the gratitude of India if they did that, but if they persist in their present politics and happen to make headway they will most certainly kill the soul of Hiudu Dharma and sap the foundations of the nation.

MUSLIM COMMUNALISM

I have time only for one more religious communalism, that of the Muslim community. Certain facts of Indian history and misinterpretations of Islam, coupled with reaction to Hindu communalism, have produced a type of Muslim communalism that is becoming a danger both to the Muslims themselves and to the country. There is one body that I would like to identify particularly as a source of such danger; I mean the Jammat-e-Islami. But it is by no means the only body of its kind.

In the historical conditions of the times Islam in its early period became inextricably mixed up with the political institution of the state. In modern times this cannot be anything but an empty ritual, nor does the institutional frame for it exist any longer since the Ataturk abolished the caliphate. But, the obscurantist minds of some Muslims cannot take in the facts of the moderen world, and so we have this interesting dialogue between Chief Justice Munir of Pakistan and Maulana Moududi.*

Justice Munir : If we have an Islamic state in Pakistan, will you permit the Hindus to base their constitution on the basis of their own religion ? Will you have any objection if the Muslims are treated in that form of government as Malishes or Shudras under the law of Manu ?

M. Moududi : I should have no objection even if the Muslims of India were treated in that form of government

*Report of the court of enquiry constituted under Punjab, Act II of 1954 to inquire into the Punjab disturbances of 1953, p. 228.

> as Shudras and Malishes and Manu's laws were applied to them, depriving them of all share in the government and the rights of a citizen.

Nothing but the most unenlightened orthodoxy could be responsible for such bigotry. The Jammat-e-Islami in India does not openly propagate this doctrine, but there is no doubt they consider the Indian state irreligius and one in which Muslims can live only an unhappy life, spiritual and material deprivations would be made up only by the community holding together in all spheres of life, including the political. According to one spokesman of this school the journal *Margadeep* : "Every religious community should have a separate political organisation. Every issue should be decided by the leaders of respective communities by holding talks." (Editorial, 25-12-1964).

It is interesting to find how communalists of all religions meet at one common point : every community must consolidate itself, must presume its separate identity, must have its own political party and so on. This is a terrifying picture of a nation divided within itself, or rather of a country made up of many separate nations. But no matter how terrifying the picture that is the destiny to which communalism is driving this country.

PROSELYTISATION

A word about proselytisation. While every religion has the right to religious freedom I for one do not see any sense in proselytisation. Indeed this activity is pregnant with religious discord and even conflict. The improvement of human society does not seem to depend upon religious conversion but on the improvement of man. In every religious problem involved here it is to ensure that every one is true to his own religion.

If we are all good Hindus, good Muslims, good Sikhs, good Christians, etc. this country would be a paradise on earth. Therefore I would appeal to all religious preachers to stop proselytising members of other religions and to concentrate on making the followeres of their respective religions better men and women.

I have dealt with some aspects of communalism and have left out many other important aspects such as economic and cultural. I am sure they will be discussed by other participants at this

convention. Before concluding I should like to emphasise that the struggle against communalism is fundamentally not a negative but a positive task. It is by educating the people in the meaning and practice of secularism, as I said at the beginning, that we shall succeed in laying the monster of communalism. Let this convention and the delegates gathered here from different parts of the country dedicate themselves to this noble cause.

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INDIA-HATERS BEHIND COMMUNAL RIOTS

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Question 1 : There is an impression after your article appeared in a Delhi fortnightly that the Muslims in India want another partition of the country and are therefore instigating disturbances.

Answer : I am very sorry that my article, which really was not an article but a write-up based on an interview, has created misunderstanding. It has never been my view that the Muslims of India want another partition or favour Pakistan by working against the country's interests. What I had said was that the facts published by the Government of India show that in a large majority of Hindu-Muslim riots that have taken place in recent years the initial provocation has come from the Muslims.

Now this is something that needs to be explained and looked into. I cannot understand this because the Muslims in the country, the general run of them, know very well from their previous experience that if they take the offensive in any dispute with Hindus they are bound to receive heavy punishment; retaliation would be out of proportion to what they might have done. What surprises me is that even so Muslims are found to take the initiative is most instances.

Question 2 : How do you explain it ?

Answer : I have propounded a theory and this is just a theory —and I would be very happy if I am proved wrong—that these things are done deliberately by *agents provocateurs* in league with India-haters in Pakistan, or maybe they are extremist

communal and pro-Pakistani Indian Muslims. Their number certainly is small, but it does not take many people to start a riot.

They must know that Muslims would be punished, but they do not mind because their motive is political. It does not matter to them if thousands lose their lives provided they serve their cause. Le me add that all this might not even be who known to the top people in Pakistan. During British rule and at the time of partition there were British officers deliberately created or abetted riots and they were in league with fanatically imperialist elements in British society.

Ouestion 3 : What could be their objective ?

Answer : To harm India. These riots tarnish India's image in the world and bring her prestige down. Then they strike at the unity of the country and retard its social, economic and cultural development, its modernisation.

SECOND PARTITION

Finally, and this may appear farfetched, the India-haters might hope that the recurrence of horrors like those of Ahmedabad might one day drive the Indian Muslims to such desperation that they might feel compelled to say to the Hindu community : "We chose this as our country; after partition we did not go to Pakistan we made India our home, but you people are not able to protect our lives, our honour or our property. Therefore, after having tried our best to live with you for so many years, we cannot bear our condition any longer. You are forcing us to leave. But where can we go ? Pakistan will not and cannot take so many of us. So give us a part of your territory." This might lead to a second partition, which would certainly be to the advantage of Pakistan. I am reminded at this point of Mr. Jinnah's remarks. When the contours of Pakistan became clear he said it was a motheaten Pakistan. This was not what he wanted; he wanted the whole of Bengal and Assam, the whole of Punjab and perhaps some other territory. And this may be at the back of the minds of the *agents provocateurs* and the extreme communalists. All this may sound too fantastic. But did not Pakistan too sound fantastic unitil it became a fact ?

Question 1 : If what you are saying is true, why has not a single agent of the kind you describe been apprehended ?

MASS EDUCATION

Question 1 : What is your remedy ?

Answer : Apart from what the Government should do—and I don't think it is doing all that needs to be done—it is the duty of those, whether they belong to political parties or not, who have the interest of their country at heart and who understand the danger of communalism to undertake an intensive campaign of mass education. Just as the Hindu communalists are working all the time, they should also be working all the time to counter the propaganda that goes on.

I was shocked when I was told in Ahmedabad that even gentle Gujarati women were saying that since the Muslims had asked for Pakistan and got it they should go away or they would be driven away. And I heard it said that the only solution was an exchange of population with Pakistan. Probably at a time when there is hatred and fury an argument with the people will rebounce. But if healthy, patriotic, enlightened propaganda is conducted. I don't think communalists will be able to influence the Hindu mind as they have done so far.

Questions 2 : Will you propose a ban on communal parties ?

Answer : Well, no. By nature, I believe in civil liberties, democracy, freedom of expression. By instinct I react against bans. But I also believe that by banning the guilty organisation we may only drive the disease below the surface. In the end this might prove worse than the remedy.

The real remedy is political education, national education. healthy education of people's minds, of which I have just spoken. This is not done. Once in a while somebody gets us on a platform and condemns communalism, but that is all. I think this is something on which all nationalist, secular, democratic parties should get together, forgetting their ideologies and personal differences, their power struggle and so on. They could join hands at least on this one programme and meet the challenge of Hindu, Muslim or any other communalism because communalism of any kind is anti-national and a danger to the country.

CONCILIATION BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Question 1. : Don't you think that conciliation between India

and Pakistan will go a long way to solve the communal problem here ?

Answer : I am quite sure it would go a long way. Perhaps Badshah Khan's visit to India will prove a major contribution to India-Pakistan conciliation, perhaps if a democratic system is established in Pakistan and if leaders like those whose names we hear come to power—I don't wish to name them, otherwise somebody there will brand them Hindu agents—democratic and healthy minded people, not sectarian, not communal, not steeped in hatred like some Pakistani leaders of old days. Then it would be easier. But I think the two things are interlinked—what comes first and what comes next is difficult to say.

We should fight communalism in our country. It is our responsibility and we must fight it in a constructive manner. It is not a law and order question alone. At the same time we should also try to start a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan. How that can be done is of course not easy to say. But this much I am sure of. If the government takes a firm decision in the larger national interest it would not be difficult to find the answer.

Question 2 : How do you explain that the so-called progressive forces, the labourers and the students, have been in the forefront of riots ? This was so in Ranchi and has been seen in Ahmedabad.

Answer : You are quite right, and I have spoken about this myself. I believe those whom you call progressives are very much up in the air. They talk in terms of their isms, their economic progress and so on, but I don't think any progressive party has tried to deal with these psychological questions or tried really to educate the working classes about the duties of citizenship, about the dangers of communalism and so on.

POSITIVE WORK

In the absence of any positive work on these lines among them—after all they are common people and they react like common people, there is not much hope. To say that just because they are workers—there is a tendency to idolise the working class—they are revolutionaries is all wrong. They might play a revolutionary role under proper leadership; they might play a reactionary role under a different kind of leadership. So I would blame the progressive leaders, the progressive groups for having

neglected their job, because as you said in most of the recent riots in the cities the industrial areas were the worst affected.

Question 1 : May I ask what Gandhiji would have done if he had been alive today ?

Answer : If Gandhiji were alive I would say these things probably have not happened at all, because had he lived all these 22 years he would I think have changed the entire shape of things. Under the compulsion of circumstances he accepted Pakistan; it was more or less forced on him. But he did not accept the fact of millions of people migrating from one side to the other. He said this was temporary. He was going to work to restore the displaced persons to their original homes. Gandhiji was thinking of going to Pakistan and if I am not mistaken Mr. Jinnah himself was very much shocked by the scale of the postpartition riots. I don't think he had visualised it or was prepared for it. I think Gandhiji would have started from that point itself and I'm sure that by now things would have been much better. But if Gandhiji were to come today, suddenly descend from the heavens, what he would do is very very difficult to say. He might be crucified a second time, you know.

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LESSONS OF THE LAST DECADE AND OURDUTY AHEAD*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

THE LAST DECADE

On the whole, the last decade has been unsatisfactory, though is ushered in the 'green revolution' and gave momentum to *gramdan* movement. During the decade we lost two of our beloved Prime Ministers, passed through two wars and suffered two terrible famines. In this very decade political uncertainties and disintegration spread, the power monopoly of Congress was broken, its own house was divided, administrative chaos become widespread, political morality touched a new low, crossing the floor became a contagion, political indiscipline increased, selfishness and lust for office became the rule, legislators were drawn into a market for sale and purchase and devaluation of ideologies continued.

In this decade again, the rate of economic development, which was slow already, became slower still. At some points, it stopped altogether, or even regressed. While per capita income had increased by 1.5 per cent in the previous decade, it was reduced to bare 0.5 per cent during 1969-70. As observed earlier, agriculture did take a hopeful ture but this development only contributed to the sharpening of already existing polarization of the rural

*Convocation Address in Hindi at Banaras Hindu University on 18 February, 1970.

society. It is evident that, if the benefits of the 'green revolution' are not made available to small peasants, royts and landless cultivators, flames of discontent will burst forth from thousands of villages. This will be the greatest challenge of this decade. Although there was industrial recession in the last decade, by the time it drew to a close, industrial development showed some signs of recovery. If political malaise does not stop this ascent of the curve or even slide it downwards, we may yet reckon that the preceding decade of disappointment was but a preclude to the progress of the present one.

Politics has however, become the greatest question mark of this decade. Some of the trends are obvious. Political disintegration is likely to spread; selfish splitting up of parties rather than their ideological polarisation will countinue; the devaluation of ideologies may go on; frequeut of party loyalties for personal or parochial benefits, buying and selling of legislators, inner party indiscipline, opportunistic alliances among parties and instability of governments—all these are expected to continue. This situation is a challenge as well as a possibility for all of us, who are the citizens of this country. If we sit idle hoping for a miracle to happen when some great leader may come to our rescue, or some dictator or political party will be born to cleanse all this filth. we would have kept our reason in abeyance and become oblivious of our duty as citizens.

SOCIETIES FOR DEFENCE OF DEMOCRACY

The question then is : What shall we do ? The answer is obvious. We should understand and do our duty as citizens of a democratic country. Political parties, legislators and ministers are becoming autocrats. They are not afraid of public opinion since there is no public opinion. They are careless for their voters because the voters are not enlightened or organized. Political parties do make their own propaganda, but that is not be create a healthy and impartial public opinion, which may rise above party politics, and effectively express itself in matters of right or wrong, moral or immoral, just or unjust. To build such a public opinion is the greatest national task and bounden duty for us. Unfortunately, the community of scholars in the last few year has shirked its responsibility in this respect. Some teachers and

students have participated in party politics and those having taste for it will continue to do so, but this process does not help in the formation of a non-partisan public opinion, which could make an impact on all the political parties. We have to appreciate the important differnce between party view and general public opinion and explain this difference to others. For this purpose Societies for Defence of Democracy may be set up in every city.

In this context there is yet another task which is even more important. That is to establish mass contact with the voters in order to enlighten them. Voters are said to be arbiters of destiny in a democracy but in practice vote-catchers have become the arbiters of the destiny of the people. Widespread illiteracy is certainly an obstacle to the enlightenment of the voters, but let us not presume that they cannot cast their vote wisely until they become educated. *India has a tradition of knowledge being acquired through audition so that the illiterate people of India possess unexpected intellectual maturity.* What is needed is that they are awakened and told how to use properly their invaluable right of vote. This social revolution is far more important than propaganda in favour of a party or a candidate. The voter must not cast his vote for money in the name of caste, or under incitement or pressure. He should vote for a candidate of good character, one who has not crossed floor; one who is not a drunkard, casteist or communalist; one who does not exploit or evict tenants; and one whose programme and policy the voter finds appropriate. We all know that the reality to day is quite the opposite. If we do not enlighten our voters in this decade, the future of our democracy will become dark.

This too will not be enough. The voters rolls have to be scrutinized and corrected. At the time of election, groups of citizens, including adult students, should go to polling booths to see that there are no immoral practices such as bogus votes, use of force, etc. being resorted to. This. obviously, can be done by only those citizens who have proven impartiality and integrity. Now, when the general elections are held, every now and then, presiding officers and their agents of requisite mettle are not easily to be found, nor is it possible for the police to be so watchful as to ensure proper observance of procedures. During the elections, falsehood and mutual abuse become rampant. So, the voters need to be acquainted with election manifestos of political parties and

also to be given authentic information about the life and work of the candidates. If teachers and students of universities and colleges take this work in their hands honestly and are able to secure the co-operation of the common citizens it is possible to eliminate the prevailing weaknesses of our political life, such as instability, opportunity, selfishness, etc. Is it too much to expect this service from our educated community ? It will be wrong to treat this work as equivalent to taking part in party politics, for this will truly be a noble task of social education.

One thing more in this connection. Is it not surprising that when there is so much talk of political degeneration and corruption, in no constituency have the voters ever gathered together to condemn the corrupt practices of their representative ? The ultimate control upon the legislators is the collective expression of their constituents. This also requires enlightened and impartial voters. To realize this objective of national importance, Voter's Education Societies should be established all over the country.

Finally, let us have a look at the political parties themselves. They have been turned into arenas for the infight of certain political gamers usually having no committed strength of members, classes or social groups behind them, which could set them on their avowed path. So, parties are only the media for aggrandisement of a few people. It is beyond you and me to restructure all political parties along distinctive ideological moulds, but we do have the strength to compel them to go straight, through our Voters' Education Societies and Defence of Democracy programme.

From the very beginning, this country like other backward countries, has been confronted with two problems namely, those of change and development. In regard to both, a mistaken nation has been persisting since the very beginning. Gandhiji sought to rectify this notion, but he did not get enough time to so. The mistaken notion was, and is that change and development can be effected through state power. Gandhiji alone knew the limitations of State Power, so he added to it the flavour of *Jana Shakti* (People's Power). At the same time be also knew that the traditional spontaneous initiative of the masses had been deliberately killed under the British rule. That is why even after Independence, an awakened, organized and effective people's power was found wanting in this country. People's minds were full of dependence upon a government which was regarded with a parental attitude

rather than by a spirit of self-help and self-reliance; and the legacy has continued.

Gandhiji realized the malady and therefore, he was planning to awaken and organize people's power. He thought of mobilizing total Indian population for the sake of national reconstruction. But then this dream vanished with him. It is now 22 years since he departed. Vinobaji has done something on the lines pointed out by Gandhiji but a lot remains to be done.

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QUESTION OF MINORITIES

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

While everyone in India and elsewhere would condemn the ghastly treatment of the minority communities in East Pakistan it would be self-defeating to slur over the events in West Bengal. Comparisons between the degree of suffering inflicted in both countries upon innocent human beings, or the attempt to belittle or explain away what happened in our own country as being a mere reaction to the events across the border, are dangerous tricks of the mind which cannot but have disastrous consequences.

It is therefore, heartening to learn from the Indian Home Minister that all political parties in West Bengal are unanimous in their determination to see that no harm is done to a single member of the minority community. This is particularly heartening because in the Calcutta riots the popular feeling and thinking in West Bengal was that the only way to assure fair treatment to the minorities in East Pakistan was to practise the deterrent philosophy of a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye.

I express my happiness at the firm declaration of Shri Gulzarilal Nanda that the question of exchange of population could never even be contemplated as a solution of Indo-Pakistan communal problem. I also welcome the announcement by the Home Minister that in this matter too all the political parties in West Bengal were united. Apparently a rapid and healthy movement of thought had taken place in West Bengal because my own discussions at the time of the riots in Calcutta revealed a dangerous

state of mind which freely expressed itself in terms of exchange of population.

Notwithstanding all good resolutions of parties and citizens and pronouncements of high official policy, the human mind being what it is bound in moments of stress to plunge into irrational courses. It is my conviction that neither in Pakistan nor in India are the minorities safe, nor is peace and tranquility and healthy inner and outward growth assured to the peoples of both the countries unless their leaders agree to sit around a table with the honest and firm determination to settle all outstanding disputes, including the dispute over Kashmir.

I do not agree with those who believe that no matter whatever we do to settle the dispute with Pakistan that country's enmity towards India will never abate because anti-Indianism is the very life-breath of Pakistan. I do not hold this view not only because I have faith in human nature but also because I am sure that the leaders of both countries are realistic enough to understand that it is in the interest of their respective countries that they bury the hatchet and clasp one another's hand and march forward together.

If the experience of the last 17 years since independence has proved anything, it is that the partition of India has settled no problems. Common interest and the compulsions of the objective situation demand that the two countries move closer together and establish in some fashion, may be of the slenderest kind to begin with, a tradition of joint working. The words confederation, alliance, community, association, concord might irk and annoy at the present moment. But I am certain that history insists on some such destiny for India and Pakistan.

In this connection it may be recalled that it was only a few years ago President Ayub Khan pleaded for a policy of a "joint defence" and Prime Minister Nehru called for a no-war declaration. Those were elements out of which an association of nation could be created. True, much water has flowed down the Ganga since then. But they still serve as eloquent reminders of the possible dawn of the realisation on both sides of the border that the destinies of the two countries are inextricably linked by history, geography and other circumstances.

KASHMIR

Turning to Kashmir, I disagree with those who speak and act as if the Kashmir issue has been settled once and for all and that the people of Kashmir have put their seal of consent upon that settlement. The very "hellfire," to use the expression of Shri Nanda, through which the minority community has recently passed in East Pakistan bears tragic testimony to the fact that the issue is far from settled. If we do not relate these facts we are behaving like ostriches. He said the problem was not legal, nor was it so much a question of facts and of apportioning praise or blame It was a human and political problem and had to be approached in that light. What was needed was fearless application of those high political and human principles to which this country has been devoted from the beginning.

Referring to the present situation in Jammu and Kashmir, I commend the remarkable communal harmony which obtained in the recent anxious days in the state. I praise the wise and courageous manner in which Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri handled the situation. But, I regret the lack of simiiar in dealing with the political issues which the situation in the state has thrown up. It is widely felt that the Kashmir Government does not enjoy the confidence and support of the people of the state. Delay in correcting the situation is fraught with great risks.

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FIGHTING CORRUPTION*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

The decade-old Santhanam Committee's report should receive more serious consideration than hitherto. The Santhanam Committee had recommended the creation of a Central Vigilance Commission to "be given by suitable legislation the powers that would be exercised by commission of Inquiry appointed under the Commission of Inquiry Act 1952, so that he (the Central Vigilance Commissioner) may undertake any inquiry relating to transactions in which public servants are suspected or alleged to have acted improperly or in a corrupt manner . . . ." The present position is that the Commissioner functions on an informal and insecure base by virtue of a mere executive order, a government resolution dated February 11, 1964. It is desirable that the office should be given a statutory backing and statutory powers.

While the Santhanam Committee's recommendation in regard to public servants has been ineffectively implemented as show above, its more important recommendation in regard to ministers has been totally shelved. The Committee had recommended that "specific allegation of corruption on the part of a minister at the Centre or in a State should be promptly investigated by an agency whose findings will command respect. If a formal allegation is made by any 10 Members of Parliament or a Legislature in writing addressed to the Prime Minister or Chief Minister, through the

*Everyman's September 1, 1973.

Speakers and Chairmen, the Prime Minister of Chief Minister should consider himself obliged, by convention, to refer the allegations for immediate investigations by the Committee. . . ." This Committee, according to the Santhanam Report, was to be drawn from a national panel constituted by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. In my view this recommendation needs to be strengthened by instituting a proper Commission of Inquiry in place of a committee appointed by the President. In this connection, the recent Tamil Nadu Public Men Inquiry Act, 1973, may be drawn upon.

LOK PAL AND LOK AYUKTA

The Administrative Reforms Committee had recommended in October 1966, the institution of the office of a Lok Pal at the Centre and a Lok Ayukta in the States, with wide statutory powers. For reasons that are not clear, the Government of India took over 18 months to make up its mind : and it was only on the 9th May, 1968, that the Lok Pal Bill was first introduced in Parliament. It was passed by the Lok Sabha in August 1969, but it made no further progress owing perhaps to the power struggle that was brewing within the Congress then and that burst out into the open in September 1969. After the Congress split, Indiraji was busy in consolidating her position, for which such spectacular steps were taken as statization of the major banks, abolition of the Princes' privy purses, etc., but the Lok Pal Bill was not considered important enough to be dealt with, with the same expedition. It was only after Indiraji's great electoral victory in 1971, that the Lok Pal Bill was re-introduced in the new Parliment on 11th August, 1971. Many spectacular Acts have been passed since the victory, such as the Constitution Amendment Acts, but the Lok Pal Bill, in its own way more important than the others, has been languishing until today. This and the other delays, and omissions pointed out below suggest a deplorable lack of any sense of urgency on the part of the Government of India in dealing with the cancerous disease not only of the body-politic but of the nation as a whole.

As for the States, they seem to be even more leisurely in this matter than the Centre. Maharashtra was the first State, I believe, where the relevant statute was passed and a Lok Ayukta

appointed with statutory powers. The Pande Ministry in Bihar had an Ordinance promulgated, under which it appointed a Lok Aynkta. Both the Ordinance and an appointment have been renewed by the present Ministry. I am not sure of the position in the other States, but even if some may have Lok Ayuktas, many more do not have the office yet.

However, let me not create the impression that the appointment of a Lok Pal and Lok Ayuktas will in itself cure the disease so rampant among ministers and civil servants. Moreover, if the Lok Pal Bill and the Maharashtra Ayukta Act, which is claimed to be patterned after the former, were carefully scrutinized, it would be discovered that the action of these vital officers is severely limited and hemmed in by restrictive provisions. It is in many ways a case of giving by one hand and taking away by the other.

POSTING AND TRANSFERS

A fertile and well-known source of corruption at the State level, which embraces M.L.As. local party functionaries and even ministers, is the matter of transfers, postings and promotions of subordinate and higher government servants of all departments. Not only is this a source of corruption, but is also occupies most of the time of the ministers. The remedy for this also is institutionalization of the system. It should be ruled, and if necessary enforced by suitable law, that ministers would be concerned with transfers, postings, etc. of only IAS and other equivalent officers, and that the rest of the business should be dealt with by appropriate committee of departmental heads presided over by the Chief Secretary. Any *pairavi* or interference by M.L.As., or other partymen or even ministers should be held against the government servant concerned. The partymen concerned should also be given a warning by the leadership. I know that this is easier said than done, but if the party leadership is keep to fight down corruption and make its party a fit instrument of service to the people. the evil could be reduced to a minimum.

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THE ONLY HOPE

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Collection of party funds, specially for elections, is perhaps the largest source of political and the other fields of corruption. One hears of fantastic amounts running into tens of crores collected by certain Ministers of the Union Cabinet and placed at the disposal of the Prime Minister. These amounts are not entered into the Congress Party's open account books, nor are they ever audited; no one knows, except for a very few, how much is collected, what part of it is pocketed by the Ministers concerned, nor how the moneys are spent. These funds are used mainly for Parliamentary and State elections, at which the dependable supporters of the leadership, particularly of those among it, whether at the Centre or in the State, who happen to have command over the vast funds, are specially favoured. These founds are also used for "managing" party members, buying up defectors, and toppling not only Opposition Ministries but also Congress Ministries in the course of party-infighting.

The way these funds are collected carry the corruption virus from the political into several other fields, such as : (a) business : encouraging dishonest practices, black money earnings and accumulations, compelling even honest business firms to turn dishonest by having to raise unaccounted funds for the ruling party through their dealers, agents, contractors, bogus souvenir advertisements, etc; (b) the bureaucracy : impairing vitally its authority, impartiality, dedication to duty and efficiency.

It is also this insatiable appetite of the ruling party for vast funds, which can come only out of black money, that is responsible, on the one hand, for the plethora of controls and other similar impediments to production, distribution and price regulation and on the other for their failure. The result is disastrous for the national economy.

I should add that while no party is above collecting its funds in black money, sometimes more by compulsion of circumstances than by choice, the ruling party alone is in the position to make the lion's share. The opposition parties, even if they use cleaner methods are reluctant to disclose the sources of their funds for fear that the ruling party will somehow wreak vengeance on their donors.

Vast sums spent over elections produce two serious consequences : (a) the voters themselves are corrupted and what is more serious, disillusioned with the democratic process; (b) the opposition parties, despairing of ever being able to much the unlimited funds of the Congress, are driven to the conclusion that the ruling party cannot be displaced through elections and therefore they turn to protests, gheraos, bandhs and violence. Indian democracy, already under attack from so many sides, has a thin chance of survival under these conditions.

It is a welcome sign that the Congress leaders are aware of this evil. Dr. Karan Singh is reported to have said at a meeting of the Parliamentary Forum for Eradication of Corruption that "elections were becoming so costly that they could be fought only with black money" *Hindustan Times*, August 10, 1973). The *Commerce* (Bombay, July 21, 1973) reports that Mr. C. Subramaniam "courageously confessed before the first convention of the National Students Union of India that black and foreign money had poured into the coffers of all political parties to help them fight the elections. Every general election was becoming incredibly costly. Only a rich person or a powerful political party can finance the elections. In this situation, Mr. Subramaniam and every candidate started his election campaign with Perjury and ended it with double accounts. He was of the view that the corrupt electoral system was the chief source of the instability of the political apparatus in the States. According to him, the political system was more corrupt, immoral most indisciplined and devoid of character. Mr. Subramaniam called upon the students of fight

such corrupt practices If a check was not placed on such widespread political immorality, the society was bound to meet with a disaster."

Mr. Subramaniam had used strong language, but his appeal to the students to check the evil only exposes his helplessness, which is not understandable. He should know that the students can do precious little in this matter. It is for Mr. Subramaniam, Dr. Karan Singh and other leaders who feel alike to take up this matter boldly in the Cabinet and the Congress Working Committee and if necessary stake their careers on this issue. The disease must be tackled at the source. In fact it is for the Prime Minister herself to make up her mind about it. She cannot be unaware of the devastating effect that this manner of raising funds is having on the moral position of the Congress party, on political morality in general as also on the bureaucracy, on private business, the electorate and on the nation as a whole. Indiraji is capable of extraordinary courage at times. And if she realizes the emptiness of electoral victories and the evil of depenning on black money, she must put her foot down firmly and stop the practice forthwith, and then deal firmly with anyone, no matter how high up, who disregards her decision. It would be far better for her and her party if she appealed to the people at large and asked her vast party organizatson to make mass collection. Business firms may also be asked to contribute, but only through cheques. A crore of rupees collected in this manner would be worth more than a hundred crores of black money. The image of the Congress would improve and its socialist credentials, which are at a great discount now, will acquire some credibility It will also tone up the bureaucracy and pave the way for dealing convincingly not only with the black money already accumulated but also with the continuous flow of black incomes.

Mr. Subramaniam has mentioned foreign money. There can be no doubt that the super powers, the USA and the USSR, who between them want to dominate the rest of the world, no matter how subtly and unobtrusively, must be spending millions of rupees in this country for all manner of purposes. The lesser powers like China and others must also be active in their own ways. Between the two super powers, the USSR has the added advantage of having an ideology, which is still considered revolutionery by some people who have not grown up beyond '30s, as well as that

of a stable and dependable political base in the CPI. For some reason while Congressmen, including the Prime Minister and the Congress President, have talked often about the CIA, they do not mention the Russion KGB. I am sure the Indo-Soviet Treaty does not bar anyone, even the Government of India, from talking about it. Another, even more striking, fact is that Indian Intelligence, all branches of which are in the hands of the Prime Minister, has not been able to unearth the sources and recipients of foreign money and taken any steps to stop the mischief. At least nothing is made known to the public. In this situation I wonder what purpose all this talk about foreign money serves, except to malign certain opposition parties without ever producing any proof. (Mr. Subramaniam, of course, did not malign any opposition party but put the blame on all parties.) If it is not in the public interest to take the public into confidence, it is better to keep quiet about it than to indulge in insinuations time and again.

REDUCE COST OF ELECTIONS

Even if the Prime Minister and the Congress High Command think it fit to heed my friendly advice, which I realize is expecting a lot, the question of the cost of elections will still remain to be tackled seriously. For the past several years a number of eminent person from the late President Rajendra Prasad downwards have spoken of the need to bring down election costs to reasonable levels, at least to the ceilings fixed by law, so that money does not play such a large and at times decisive, part in determining the shape of our legislatures and governments. To this end a number of suggestions have also been put forward from time to time. The Chief Election Commissioner and the Joint Committee on Amendments to Election Law have also grapped with the question and made certain recommendations. One of the more radical suggestions made by some leaders, including Dr. Faridi of the Muslim Majlis, with which I myself have been in sympathy, is the adoption of the combined system, current in West Germany of voting at the same time for individual candidate and for the political parties in the field. It has also been suggested that the Government itself, as in West Germany, the UK and some other countries, should meet a part of the candidates' election expenses on specified items.

In view of the importance of the question, particularly in the context of much talked of socialist ideals it seems to me that the government should set up a commission, including leaders of all parties recognised by the Chief Election Commission as national parties, as well as a few distinguished political scientists, with specialization in this field and presided over by either the Chief Election Commissioner or a distinguished public leader, unattached to any party. The commission should be asked to report in a year and try to reach a consensus among its members. Should the commission's recommendations be based on a general consensus, the Government of India should accept and implement them *in toto*. In the absence of a consensus, the Government should formulate its own proposals based on the commission's report and place them before Parliament for as speedy a disposal as possible.

EVIL OF DEFECTIONS

Political defections as witnessed in the past few years, particularly since 1967, has been another great source of political corruption. So much have been written on the subject that there is no need to dilate upon it here. I have only two observations to make. One concerns the delay, as in the other cases mentioned above, in implementing the recommendations of the Committee appointed by the Government pursuant to a resolution of the Lok Sabha dated December 8, 1967, "to consider the problem of legislators changing their allegiance from one party to another and the frequent crossing of the floor in all its aspects and make recommendations in this regard". Mr. Y.B Chavan, the then Home Minister, was its Chairman and it was an all-party committee, Pandit H.N. Kunzru and myself being the only non-party members. After my sad experience about my report on the Welfare of Weaker Sections, which just got shelved somewhere in the Union Secretariat, I had decided not to serve on any Government committee in future. But when Mr. Chavan requested me to join the anti-defection committee. I gladly agreed because I was deeply worried about the ruinous effect of the new evil on our party system, the stability of governments, the character of the people's representatives and the quality and substance of our democracy.

It is true that the Committee's recommendations did not go far enough yet I am sure if its moderate proposals had been accepted, it would have had quite a dampening effect on likely turncoats and the defection epidemic would have been considerably checked.

As for the Committee's recommendations not being radical enough, the fault lay mostly with the Congress itself and to some extent with such opposition leaders as had somehow discerned at that time a process afoot of what they termed "polarization" of politics in operation. The lawyers' sub-committee set up by the Defection Committee had recommended a drastic remedy, namely that those defecting should lose their seats in the legislatures concerned and go back to their constituents to seek a fresh vote. As the official records will show, Mr. Ramamurthy of the CPI (M) and I were the only members of the Committee who made similar suggestions, but the Congress was not prepared to go so far. Had the Congress also supported our view, I have no doubt that several other parties would have fallen in line and there would have been, if not a general consensus, at least a large majority in its favour. The Congress took so conservative a line in fact that its representatives were not prepared to accept even the modest suggestion, which too had a large backing, for limiting the size of Ministries to 10 per cent of the membership of unicameral legislatures and 11 per cent of the bicameral legislatures. Mr. Chavan's great difficulty then appeared to be that the Union Council of Ministers itself had more than 11 per cent of the combined strength of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha. As for those who were dreaming of polarization of politics and were therefore, anxious not to put impediments to the passage of legislators from one side to the other, I pleaded in vain that the process at work, to my mind, was not polarization, but just its opposite, namely fragmentation. Later events proved this diagnosis to be correct, which could have been checked to some extent even if the limited recommendations of the Chavan Committee had been implemented expenditiously.

In the event, the country witnessed the most shameful spectacle of political immorality and degradation. Party labels and ideologies lost all meanining and a brisk market flourished in which legislators were sold and bought as cattle. Money or ministership were the main baits and the highest bidder ultimately won. During the coalition government days in the States between

1967 and 1972, the opposition parties, which were the ruling parties then, played the game with as much gusto as the Congress had, ever displayed. After the Corgress split in 1969 and the masterly strokes played by Indiraji, which put her on top and clearly foretold of a new high tide in her fortunes, the trend was reversed and all self-seekers, irrespective of party loyalties or ideologies if any, rushed to get on her bandwagon, Money, of course, was available for anyone, but ministries were limited. However, a safe seat in the legislature and promise of election expenses were more than enough for most of such politicians. After Indiraji's astounding victory in the Lok Sabha elections, there was a veritable stampede, particularly in the unstable States, where only four years earlier the Congress Sun (it was the undivided Congress then) had seemed to have set for ever, to get into the now Congress. No wonder the State etections of 1972, marked a remarkable comeback for the now Congress.

The harm done by these murky goings-on to political ethics, to the credibility of political parties and their slogans, to the validity of the party system, and, most important, to Indian democracv itself was incalculable Again, I cannot help feeling that if a law, or a constitutional amendment, if it was considered legally necessary, had been passed incorporating even the limited recommendations of the Chavan Committee, much of the political degradation could have been prevented. I also cannot help feeling that the new Congress, after the split, was anxious to read the utmost benefit from political turncoatism and, therefore, was in no hurry to put any obstacles in the way of defection. This was political polarization with a vengeance, but of a meaningless kind because it brought together many who were not motivated by political affinity by naked self-interest.

Thus, it was only after the Congress had reaped a rich harvest that it thought it opportune to introduce the Anti-Defection Bill on May 16, 1973, in the Lok Sabha, i.e., after over 4 years and 4 months of the Chavan Committee's report which was submitted on January 7, 1969.

However, belated as this Bill is, it is to be welcomed as a step in the right direction. I am very pleased that the Bill require a defector to resign his seat in the legislature and seek a fresh mandate from his constituents. That is a great advance over the recommendation of the Chavan Committee. At the same time the

Bill suffers from some serious defects, owing to imprecise definition of defection in one respect and an exaggerated and mischievous definition in another.

It seems that the Congress party has taken into account only its own experience and its own interests. According to clause (2) of the 32nd Constitution Amendment Bill, "A person shall be disqualified for continuing as a member of either House of Parliament, if he, having been elected as such member, voluntarily gives up his membership of the political party by which he was set up as a candidate in such election or of which he becomes a member after such eletion." If the last words "such election" will mean, in law, an election in which he was set up by a political party, he should, of course, be disqualified to continue as a member; but if the words can also be construed to mean an election in which he stood as an independent candidate, his joinlng any party after the election cannot be considered an offence and no disqualification should apply to him. The Bill should take care to make this quite clear.

Clause (3) of the Bill states : "Notwithstanding anything in Clause (2), a member of either House of Parliament shall not be disqualified under sub-clause (A) of Clause (2) on the ground that he has voluntarily given up his membership of any political party if he has given up his membership of such political party by reason of a split therein." It is here that the definition of defection is imprecise and incomplete. The Congress party having itself gone through the experience of split recently, that contingency is well taken into account. But what will happen : (a) when two or more parties represented in the legislature merge together to form a new party with a new name, or (b) when one or more parties merge into an existing party, under whose name the merged party continues to function, or (c) when a party expels a member and he is admitted into another party ? All these contingencies are common in our political life and the Bill must take them into consideration.

MOST OBJECTIONABLE FEATURE

But to my mind the most objectionable part of this Bill is Clause (2) (B), which states : "If he votes or abstains from voting in such House contrary to any direction issued by such political

party or by any person or authority authorized by it in this behalf without obtaining prior permission of such party, person or authority."

Mere non-compliance with a party whip can never be considered to political defection because such a member has neither changed sides nor crossed the floor; he continues to remain a member of his party. A member of legislature, under the party system, is certainly expected to be loyal to his party, but he has also other and higher loyalties—the highest being loyalty to his conscience. He has also a loyalty to his constituents and to the nation and, if he is a person of wider vision, also the world community. Ordinarily, a member of a party is expected to follow the directions of the party, but at times he might find himself unable to do so on account of his other loyalties. Therefore, non-compliance with a party whip can never be considered sufficient for his being compelled to resign his seat. That will only establish party tyranny and mar the functiong of democracy. Disobedience of a party's directive is properly an internal matter of party discipline and should be considered as such. It has no place whetever in the Constitution of India.

Finally, it is not clear why the Bill adds a new provision to Article 103 of the Constitution, which reads; "Provided that the President shall not entertain any question as to whether a member of either House of Parliament has become subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in Clause (2) of Article 102 unless the question has been referred for his decision by the political party or any person or authority authorized by it in this behalf. In the first place it is not clear why Article 103 of the Constitution should require the President, in consoltation with the Election Commission, to decide such a matter. One should have thought it came within the jurisdiction of the courts. In the second place, it seems strange that unless a defector's party refers his case to the President, he should be safe from the consequences of his immoral political conduct. Except for these blemishes, some of them quite serious, I welcome this belated Bill and hope it will soon be made law, with its faults appropriately corrected.

Here, then, are some concrete suggestions, most of them not new, for checking corruption and raising the generally of our political life. Several of these are already in various stage of implementation. I have suggested some improvement and stressed

the harm done by delays already incurred and the need in the future to deal with them with the utmost expedition.

In conclusion, let me emphasize for all I am worth that the remedies—and others that may be thought of—would be little avail if the will to reform were wanting in the political (including Opposition) and bureaucratic elite of the country.

Let every citizen, who realises the paramount importance of a moral regeneration of our politics, lend a helping hand in whatever way possible to this process. Only then will he earn the right and be able to find the way, to take the initiative in his own hand and act massively to undo the present mischief and usher in a new era of moral and material revolution. I, for one, cannot see the way yet because I have not done enough myself in this direction, and also because I have still hope that our leaders, whether the Left, Right or Centre will correct themselves.

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MORAL REGENERATION : A ROLE FOR YOU

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Those of our readers who might have read my articles under the general title "First Things First" might recall the concluding part of the last one ("Clean Elections Not with Dirty Money"). I hope such of our readers as might have missed the articles, or any part of them, will kindly look up their copies, or borrow them from a friend and read what they might have missed before. My reason for making this rather unusual request is that every citizen who is concerned about the moral regeneration of the country's politics has a role to play. In the articles I have concentrated on political and administrative corruption because, though almost every field of our national life has been corrupted, the cleansing process must begin with politics for the simple reason that is an underdeveloped society, such as ours, politics happens to command a dominant position and affects the citizens' lives at nearly every point.

As I said in my article, what role ordinary citizens can play in the process of moral regeneration is not yet clear to me. That is why I had requested the readers of *Everyman's* to send their suggestions to the Editor. So far, I am not aware that any reader has responded. May I, therefore, request such of you as may have constructive suggestions to be good enough to communicate with the Editor or with me by name. Not every suggestion can be published in the *Everyman's* but I assure you that I shall personally consider every suggestion made. I hope that something practical and effective will emerge from this churning of our thoughts.

CITIZEN'S ACTION

In the meanwhile, a few words about the kind of citizen's action that I have in mind. First of all, the action must be completely non-violent; secondly, it must not be directed against any individual, group or party but against the evil that has to be fought; thirdly, it must not be motivated by any selfish consideration; fourthly, those participating in the action must not belong to any political party because then the action might not be able to transcend partisan motivation. That is bound to affect its disinterestedness, and, therefore, its effectiveness.

As I visualise the possible lines of action, the participant in it should be prepared for the sacrifice and suffering that it may entail. Also the participants must themselves be free from corruption in their public or private life. This may appear to be a tall order because none of us is a saint. Yet, the citizen concerned should search his heart and decide for himself his fitness to participate in such a movement. I am aware that the conditions created by the Government are such that even honest citizens are sometimes driven to petty acts of corruption for mere survival. However, the danger of this being made an excuse for an easy conscience must always be borne in mind. The risk of suffering and sacrifice of which I have warned above may perhaps serve to some extent to sift the grain from the chaff.

In considering possible lines of action, the citizen should keep in mind that demonstration, noisy processions, strikes, bandhs, use of violence—all these have been tried and found largely ineffective. Therefore, we must break new ground.

Roots of Corruption

Corruption is at all levels of politics and government. But, the ordinary citizen comes face to face with it only at the lower levels : in the electoral booth and in his village or muhalla at polling time; at the clerical or junior officer level in government or quasi-government offices. He should bear in mind, however, that corruption at the lower levels is not likely to be eliminated or even curbed, unless the disease is tackled at the top levels. Therefore, in making his suggestions he should keep this in mind.

It is also true that as far as the common citizen is concerned, more than political and official corruption, it is the traders, shop-

keepers and such like at whose hands he suffers more cruelly and frequently. Perhaps, in a later issue of this journal I shall discuss this question more fully. I have no doubt that ordinary citizens have a great role to play in this field. But they must get rid of their centuries-old inertia and learn to stand on their own legs, rather than be used by political parties, that might sincerely want to help, by their party interests and often following methods of physical force and violence that in the sum do more harm than good.

Lastly, I must confess that the hope that I had expressed in my article that the top leadership of the ruling Congress may soon recognize the cancer growing in the body-politic and do something effective about it, has been badly shaken by the proceedings of the recent AICC Session. What about the Opposition parties ? From the past experience of non-Congress coalition Governments and from the apparent unconcern of these parties about this terrible disease, except as a whip to flog the Congress with, there seems to be little hope from them. While, on the one hand, this is saddening beyond measure, on the other, it heightens greatly the responsibility of the ordinary citizen.

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RIGHTS TO FREEDOM*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

So much has been said and written about the recent judgment of the Supreme Court and appointment of the new Chief Justice, that there was no need for me to add to the cacophony. But as an old freedom-fighter, who even after Independence has tried to serve his country and his people to the best of his ability, I have been so deeply distressed and worried by the recent happenings, that I cannot restrain myself from sharing my anxieties with my countrymen, and particularly with fellow freedom-fighters especially those of the ruling party.

Like millions of those who had fought and suffered for the country's freedom, I too had a golden vision of independent India. Today when I compare the reality with that vision I am filled with sadness. And when I ponder over the future that the recent events portend, my heart sinks. I cannot believe that it can be otherwise with my fellow freedom-fighters.

It is in this belief that I am venturing to write these lines. This is not meant to be a polemical or critical piece, but is an earnest appeal to the Prime Minister and those Congressmen who have publicly expressed their faith in democracy and socialism.

In the recent past whenever I happened to have expressed dissent or critical judgments, I have been roundly denounced as anti-Indiraji, a spokesman of right reaction and worse. Generally

*JP's letter addressed to the Members of Parliament on December 15, 1973.

speaking, my detractors have been from the same quarters as have made it their business for the past several decades not to miss an opportunity to attack and revile me.

Lately, these quarters have behaved as if they alone are the true friends and supporters of the Prime Minister and enjoy her confidence. The result is that what is said gets lost in the din of declamation, rather than being dispassionately considered.

I, therefore, wish to make it clear, though I regret that it should at all have been necessary to do so, that I have no reason to be anti-Indiraji. On the contrary, I have every reason to wish her well and see her march from success to success.

Whatever I have said in the past and may say now and in the future was, and will be, motivated by my concern for the country and its future. The school in which I have grown up has taught me not to let personal affection and regard stand in the way of performance of duty. My professional detractors will no doubt brush this all aside. But I do hope that the Prime Minister and those Congressmen to whom these words are addressed will give some thought to this appeal.

My appeal is on two counts : (i) the fundamental rights of the citizen; and (ii) the independence of the judiciary. It appears from the analyses made by knowledgeable persons that a majority of the judges of the Supreme Court has ruled that the citizens' fundamental rights and freedom, as laid down in the Constitution, can be not only amended but also abrogated by Parliament.

The Constitution unfortunately lumps together rights to property with such fundamental rights as those of freedom of speech and expression, freedom of association and movement, etc. The so-called confrontation between the executive and the judiciary that has taken place so far has, in each case, been concerned with rights to property.

Property is a social institution and in a democracy it must serve the social good as conceived of by the prescribed democratic will of the people and realised in a democratic manner. As such, private ownership of property of certain kinds can be limited, regulated, even extinguished, if necessary.

But in a democracy, while the fundamental rights to freedom may be abridged and regulated, they cannot be abrogated though they may be suspended for temporary periods of national emergency, war and in such other circumstances as are listed in

the Constitution.

If those Congressmen who are committed to democracy are sincere in their faith and are vigilant enough, it is their duty to ensure that the present or future Parliament does not take advantage of the Supreme Court's judgment to extinguish the fundamental freedom of the citizen. No doubt, the Prime Minister and other spokesmen of her party have, from time to time, assured the people that they have no idea whatever to do this. But mere assurances are no safeguard against the misuse of power. It is necessary the assurance is written into the Constitution in such form as may be appropriate.

Some Congressmen may plead that their parallel commitment to socialism is as important as their commitment to democracy and, therefore, it may become necessary sometimes to deprive the people of their fundamental freedoms of speech, expression, association and movement, etc. in order to establish socialism. I hope that on second thoughts, such friends will realise the fallacy, nay the mischief, of this argument. This is a slippery path and will end up not in democratic socialism but in dictatorial communism.

The repeatedly proclaimed aim of the democratic socialists has been to establish socialism by democratic means. But if establishment of socialism necessitates the abrogation of the people's fundamental freedom, what remains of democratic means ? It should be realised that the extinction of these rights might lead to the extinction of free platform and press, of opposition parties, of all trade unions, except the official ones, of all such institutions and organisations as do not agree with the ruling party.

I am not suggesting that there is an immediate danger of all this happening. I am merely pointed out the logic of unlimited power. Therefore, my earnest appeal to the Prime Minister and her democratic socialist colleagues is to rise above partisan considerations. Look into the future and assure the present and coming generations that their liberties would remain intact, their miseries would be brought to an end and that they would be enabled to live in a free, just and equal society.

INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY

As for the second part of my appeal, I take my stand on the principle that the Congress and its critics are agreed upon, namely,

the principle of the independence of the judiciary. There is clearly a national concensus on this question. That being so, I ask the Prime Minister and her colleagues if the manner of appointing a new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court upholds this universally accepted principle.

I do not think any fairminded person will agree that it does. Parenthetically, it is necessary to emphasise that nothing said here casts any reflection whatever on the integrity and ability of the present Chief Justice. What is being discussed is not any personality, but a principle and its faithful implementation.

I am sorry to say that all that has been said by the Prime Minister and her colleagues to justify their action is utterly unconvincing. Much of it is also misleading. Competent writers have argued all this out in the Press.

I am not competent to suggest what procedure should be followed. The Constitution itself lays down a procedure, namely, the same as in the case of other judges of the court. There was also a convention which had been followed for the past 25 years. The Law Commission had recommended a procedure. The Government claims to have followed that, but it has done so only partially, disregarding other essential criteria laid down. I am sure other suitable procedures can be devised.

The simple fact is that if the appointment of the Chief Justice of India remains entirely in the hands of the Prime Minister of India, as has been the case in the present instance, then the highest judicial institution of this country cannot but become a creature of the Government of the day.

Therefore, my appeal to the Prime Minister is that she should appoint a parliamentary committee, representative of all the parties in Parliament, to go into this vital question and make recommendations to Parliament. The committee naturally should have power to consult public opinion, including the opinion of the Bar and of eminent jurists. The procedure evolved and recommended should also apply *mutatis mutandis* to the High Courts.

In sum, unless constitutional safeguards are provided to restrain Parliament from abrogating the fundamental freedoms of the citizen except suspending them for temporary periods and in clearly specified circumstances, and unless the independence of the judiciary is credibly assured, the very foundations of our democracy will be in danger of being totally destroyed.

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MESSAGE TO THE NATION*

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

Many friends have been pressing me in the past few months to say something to the nation. Being bedridden and therefore out of touch with the objective situation in the country, I have been hesitating to say anything. Only a few days ago the Prime Minister† spoke to the nation. After his excellent discourse, I should have thought there was no need for any other voice to be raised. But friends still think that the Prime Minister having spoken as head of the government, there was need for a common citizen like me to speak on behalf of the people. While I disclaim any authority to speak for the people, I am placing here my views as a common citizen.

The first observation that I should like to make and emphasise is that the results of the last general elections were due to the students' and people's movement that had started from Gujarat and spread to Bihar and whose message had resounded throughout the country. The essence of that message was that an elected representative of the people does not necessarily acquire a right to hold on to his position until the expiry of his legal term. The principle that was asserted during the movement was that if an individual representative, or a representative government, fail in his duty, became corrupt and oppressive and inefficient, the electors,

*Text of the Braodcast to the Nation on April 13, 1977.
†Mr. Morarji Desai.

i.e., the people had a right to demand his resignation irrespective of the time he may yet have left to serve. The example of ex-President Richard Nixon of the United States illustrates the proposition I am enunciating here.

It is true that what is called the 'right of recall' has no place in our Constitution, but in a democracy, the people have an unwritten right which they can exercise if and when necessary.

All this does not mean that any small number of disgruntled persons have the right to demand an elected representative or government to step down from office whenever they wish. But it does mean that if it is found beyond any doubt that a vast majority of the people concerned are convinced of the corruption, nepotism and inefficiency of a government or an elected representative and demand their resignation, the people's voice must prevail. It is possible that the party in power, or the individual representative concerned, might also mobilise supporters, but if there is a genuine people's upsurge against them, democratic ethics and practice require that the will of the great majority must prevail over that of small minority.

To the constitutionalists, this may appear to be an anarchic proposition. However, it should be remembered that practically every major constitution in the world was drafted in the wake of revolutionary upheavals.

This is a good occasion to look back and recall how the students' movement against corruption in Gujarat has assumed an all-India character. Political and governmental corruption was the central point of the people's movement. Therefore, it is the duty of those who have come to power in the wake of that movement to take some concrete and effective steps to stop and root out corruption from these spheres. It is my view that just like the High Courts and the Supreme Court, there should be an autonomous Institution set up with legal authority and rights both at the Centre and in the States. The Swedish Ombudsman naturally comes to one's mind, but in Indian conditions some broader kind of institution seems to be necessary. For instance, at the Centre a body that may be known as Lok Pal might be set up consisting of not more than five members with powers to hold investigations on their own initiative as well as on the initiative of any citizen or any private or public body. A group of individual jurists might be entrusted with the task of drawing up a blueprint of such a

these evils also falls within the purview of the total revolution.

Coming to more modern spheres of life, such as education, it is time that the radical recommendations of the several education commissions, the Kothari Commissions, not being the least of them, are implemented. Here we might follow the example of China in which all the schools and colleges were closed down and the students were sent out to the villages and slums of the towns to impact the rudiments of education to very citizen young or old.

I have not said anything here about the usual socio-economic reforms that are so much talked about, but about which so little has actually been done. For this task too, youth power can be drafted with advantage to the youth themselves and to society at large.

Finally, if God grants me better health in the coming months I look forward to take up my cry of total revolution and do whatever might lie in my power. Meanwhile, the work need not be stopped. Let everyone do his bit, singly or in co-operation with others. Here is a beacon light for our youth. I hope they will steer the course of their life towards that light. I am at their disposal even in my sick bed for advice and such guidance as I might be capable of giving.

So forward my young friends.
Sampoorna kranti ab nara hai.
Bhawi itihas hamara hai.

PART II

56

EVOLUTION OF JP's REVOLUTION

MADHU DANDAVATE*

"Freedom with the passing of the years transcended the mere freedom of my country and embraced freedom of man everywhere and from every sort of trammel—above all it meant freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind, freedom of the spirit. This freedom has become a passion of life and I shall not see it compromised for bread, for power, for security, for the glory of the State or for anything else." —*Jayaprakash Narayan*

On 11th October, 1977, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan completed 75 years of his eventful life. He began in early 30s as an ardent Marxist pledged to the task of socialist revolution. He remained in that period the most vocal spokesman of Marxian thought. He interpreted all social development in terms of the basic Marxian postulates and never found any need to subject them to a searching analysis.

However, gradually JP opened the windows of his mind and since then he remained susceptible to all winds of change. Mahatma Gandhi, in his letter to Shri Rabindra Nath Tagore, had said, "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be

* Finance Minister, Government of India, India,

blown off my feet by any." These words soon became the expression of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan's thought processes and actions. The rigid structure of Marxian thought by which Shri Jayaprakash Narayan swore for years started sagging during the period of the Second World War and he felt the imperative need to lend more flexibility to Marxism. He, however, still continued to call himself a Marxist with his irrevocable faith in dialectical materialism.

Man's thoughts change under the impact of various forces. No doubt, social-economic factors are the most dominant among them. However, at times even some of the inner moral compulsions do exert their preponderent influence and so it happened in the case of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan.

At the national conference of the Socialist Party held at Nasik in 1948 Jayaprakash Narayan's report presented to the Conference in his capacity as the General Secretary of the Party constituted a new mile-stone in his thought progress. In his report, he elaborately dealt with the problems of ends and means and stressed that unless there was emphasis on fair means, fair ends were likely to elude us. In this context, he appealed to the socialists to realise that one of the tasks of creating a socialist society was to create a new atmosphere in the society congenial to moral and human values in life. He expressed the hope on that occasion that eminent spiritualists like Shri Raman Maharshi would play their own part in this task of moral rejuvenation of the country.

These views expressed by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan were only a straw in the wind. Later on, elaborating this aspect against the background of the horrors of Stalin's Russia, he wrote :

> "Russians or Stalin's interpretation of socialist philosophy has reduced it to Machiavellian code of conduct utterly devoid of any sense of right or wrong, good or evil. The ends justify the means and when the end is power—personal and group power—there is no limit for the depth to which the means will sink to secure the object. The struggle for power in every communist State—struggle not against the old order but amongst communist power seekers—has led to a totalitarianism that bears little resemblance to that free and egalitarian society that was proclaimed by the father of socialism as the goal of revolution. To the horrors of this

unscrupulous amoral political philosophy, Gandhi offers a corrective that socialists would overlook only at the cost of the very substance of their creed."

However, a mere decisive event in the transformation of Jayaprakash Narayan's ideological orientation came in the year 1952, when he undertook for 21 days, a self-purification fast in Poona. The ordeal of the fast was a sequel to the pricking of Jayaprakash Narayan's conscience. JP had talks with the then Union Minister for Post and Telegraph Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai regarding the demands arising out of the postal strike of 1946. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan gave certain assurance to the postal employees on the basis of his talks with the Union Minister particularly in relation to the wages for the strike period and then he discovered from the public statements by the Union Minister that no such assurances were given by the Minister. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan felt that in not securing the assurances in writing, he had failed in his duties. To relieve the pangs of his conscience, he therefore undertook a 21-day fast at Poona.

During this fast Shri Jayaprakash Narayan re-examined all his past ideological moorings and pondered over new challenges of life. After the fast, JP emerged a new man with a new dimension in his thinking. He asked to himself the question whether ceaseless pursuit of materialism would ever provide by itself incentive to goodness and came to the conclusion that a fresh thinking on the subject was urgently called for.

In a brief article, "Incentive to Goodness" which he wrote after the fast, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan admitted :

> "for many years I have worshipped at the shrine of the goddess Dialectical materialism . . . materialism of any sort robs man of the means to become truly human . . . man must go beyond the material to find incentives to goodness. . . Rejecting matter as an ultimate reality immediately elevates the individual to a moral plane."

After the fast, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan no more remained the old orthodax Marxist. Humanism in him started overshadowing other ingredients of his ideology and his thinking acquired new moral overtones.

During the 1952 general elections, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan undertook extensive election tours. However, even during these electoral battles, he never believed that ballot box was the only lever of change. He was one of the few who stressed the need for constructive as well as combative activities side by side with the politics of the ballot box. It was not an accident that while Shri Jayaprakash Narayan remained the most vibrant symbol of the Socialist Party, he himself never contested the elections. In the midst of all electoral battles, he always wanted the Socialists to realise that work outside the legislatures and beyond the corridors of power was also of equal importance.

It was here that JP developed some link with Vinoba's thinking against the background of the happenings in Telengana. The landless peasants in Telengana whose lands were unjustly grabbed by the greedy landlords were up in arms against those landlords. The Communists were struggling to make Telengana a laboratory of their experiments of change through violence and insurrection. Though Vinoba did not believe in violence, he felt that the hunger of the peasants for land was genuine and he, therefore, wanted to provide a non-violent alternative to armed struggle of the peasants to secure land.

Vinoba initiated the first Bhoodan experiment in a village in Telengana and pleaded with the landowners to transfer a substantial portion of their lands to the landless under the dictates of their conscience.

The sensitive mind of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan was touched by the noble thoughts of Vinoba's movement and he announced his decision to renounce party politics and dedicated himself to the fundamental tasks of the Bhoodan movement. However, JP who joined the Bhoodan movement carried with him the socialist heritage of the struggle perspective. He repeatedly announced that Bhoodan movement believed in appealing to the landowners to transfer their lands to the landless peasants but at the same time did not rule out peaceful struggle of the landless against injustice perpetrated either by the landlords or by the Government. JP also stressed the importance of keeping Bhoodan movement free from dependence on the State machinery.

In one of his talks to the social workers in Bombay delivered at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, prior to the declaration of the Emergency, Shri Jayaparkash Narayan admitted his major errors

of judgement in the past. He confessed that in one respect Gandhiji's approach turned out to be more accurate and realistic whereas his and Vinobaji's appeared to be erroneous. Even while emphasising constructive activities and social reforms, Gandhiji did not discard the medium of politics; he only tried to cleanse it. During his talk, JP admitted that it was a mistake on his part to have underestimated the potentialities of the medium of politics. Secondly, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan traced partial failure of the Bhoodan movement to its tendency to look towards the State machinery for the task of re-distribution of land secured through Bhoodan. Thirdly, JP admitted that his earlier pronouncements that Bhoodan movement did not eschew peaceful struggles of the peasants remained unimplemented.

Both, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Vinoba inherited the spirit of compassion from Mahatma Gandhi.

However, it was to the credit of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan that unlike Vinoba, he did not allow the spirit of compassion to become a protective shield for the vested interests and the establishment. It is here that Shri Jayaprakash Narayan parts company with Vinoba.

The grim struggle of the people during the dark period of the Emergency and ultimate victory of the democratic forces after the lifting of the Emergency was a triumph of Shri Jayapraksh Narayan's struggle perspective over Vinoba's passivity in the midst of tyranny. The difference between the two approaches has now become more discernible.

During the pre-Emergency struggle in Gujarat and Bihar, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan gave a call for Total Reveolution. This concept of total revolution was the culmination of his early ideas of revolution that gradually matured by stages against the background of changing situations. The total revolution which Shri Jayaprakash Narayan professed had a wide canvass covering socio-economic and moral fields. Very often those who hail Shri Jayaprakash Narayan's ideas of total revolution little realise that some of his ideas were unpalatable to them. For instance, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan's crusade against casteism, orthodoxy and superstition is often embarrassing to JP's own followers. At Varanasi, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan told the youth in a meeting to come forward and break the sacred threads round their bodies that had chained their minds and held them captive in the bastion of casteism. It was a small incident, but with a deeper significance

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan told the youth that he did not believe in the caste system based on privileges accrued by birth in a particular caste. The sacred thread could be worn only by those who were born in a high caste. The thread was, therefore, a symbol of social inequity and should be discarded. It was no wonder that this call to the youth by Shri Jayaprakash Naryan was received with dismay by those whose minds were still burdened by the dead weight of orthodoxy and traditions.

While expressing his views about the atrocities on the Harijans and Adivasis, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan has warned the society that if the problem was not settled through understanding, the spirit of class struggle will have to be invoked. Many were disturbed by those pronouncements of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. In substance, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan only indicated that economic struggles of the landless Harijans and Adivasis would have to be co-ordinated with their struggle to overthrow the social oppression to which they are subjected.

Even when the Janata Party Government has been established, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan has rightly stressed the need to form Vigilance Committees at people's level to protect the rights and interests of the common man. To the extent these forces of Vigilance will gain strength and power the administrative lacunae can be removed and people's interest protected.

The total revolution which JP envisages has to percolate to all fields including basic approaches and perspectives of economic planing. In a developing country like ours, JP does not favour mere imitation of the technology of advanced capitalist or communist countries but he emphasises that the decentralisation of economic power as well as dispersal of technology to the rural areas can take place only if an appropriate balance is restored between cottage industries, small scale sector and large scale sector with the guideline that whatever can be produced in the cottage industry would not be allowed in the small scale sector and whatever can be produced in the small scale sector would not be permitted in the large scale sector. Such a new rhythm within the parameters of the Gandhian framework is what JP envisages today.

It may appear rather paradoxical that Shri Jayaprakash Narayan's concept of total revolution itself has undergone a great revolution. The evolution of this revolution may appear rather strange but in the case of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, it has been a reality.

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HIS UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

SUGAT DASGUPTA

Jayaprakash Narayan possesses the unique distinction of having led two revolutions of the country, one in the 'forties and the other in the 'seventies. Although Gandhi had given the call for the 'Quit India' movement in 1942, it was Jayaprakash who had led the not non-violent sector of the movement from inside the country. In 1974, he was, of course, single-handed in his fight against the powers of a modern oligarchy that had chosen to ignore all public demands for a cleansing of the administration. The two battles were of some importance in contemporary history and had drawn the attention of the right thinking people all over the globe no less than the two Chinese revolutions had done. An American political scientist who is writing about the Forty-two Movement finds that the number of people that had taken part in 1942, were the biggest that had ever joined any open rebellion. The social movement of the 'seventies, a new civil rights movement, so to say, was likewise the greatest upheaval of Asia, if not of the world after the 'fifties. It is a rare honour for a leader to be trusted by his people to lead two consecutive revolutions, one after the other. What is still rarer in distinction is, however, that JP did not personally assume power on either of the occasions, but had retained his leadership role. Unlike all leaders of similar movements elsewhere and like Gandhi in India, he had merely helped others to exercise "power" in the name of "his revolutions". While JP is thus for ever spared the trauma of having

created a system that might defeat the system that created the power, the distinction of being the nation's first servant in the truest sense of the term belongs to him. More about it later.

A chief minister paying a tribute to JP in 1970 had said that while others, meaning people in office, had some reward or the other (meaning assumption of public office) JP had not had any rewards whatsoever in his life. Little did the CM realise, or many others even today, that the rewards that JP has received, or had sought for, were not those which people generally seek in terms of office, position and power for themselves. JP remains, as the Magsaysay award put in its citation about him, the keeper of the conscience of a people.

Inheriting the mantles of Gandhi, the role that J.P. has projected in his person is one that is totally different from that which politics, wars, formal rewards, power struggles and their like entail. It is therefore not true to say about JP that he had no rewards for his labour.

There is another myth about JP which has it that JP had left politics and came back to it through his participation in the last general elections of 1977. JP had, in fact, never given up polities. What he sought to achieve was to find the rationale for a new society and to introduce a new politics in the country for the purpose. The movement—his total revolution—the lone sad days at Chandigarh—the battle of the kidney at Jaslok—the participation in elections—the creation of the Janata front, his role as a non-participant commander crusading for democracy, the victory of the front and JP's willing retirement to the two-room flat of the Mahila Charkha Samiti at Kadam Kuan—all provide the scenario of the new politics.

II

The central thrust of J.P.'s life has not been power but social change. The Sarvodaya movement had certainly provided him with a platform for it—when J.P. joined the movement in the fifties; but the search for a new politics was in his blood all along his career. Even before he gave up party politics, observers were found to accuse him of lacking the will for power. In the day-to-day work of the administration of the several organisations that J.P. has founded, one could similarly find that J.P. has a natural

inclination to be with those who were not in power. His urge, in short, is to build a system of power that will have no victims in it. It any situation of confrontation, therefore, in the system, his heart will go with one who is not in power irrespective of the merits of the situation. It first in well with J.P.'s recent interview to Mrs. Gandhi for an hour; it fits in well with J.P.'s concern about anybody in distress irrespective of the harm he might have done to him. This is J P. This is his politics !

It is indeed an attempt to turn the political pyramid upside-down. Toiling for a political system that would not give any prerogative to power, J.P. sought to build a politics without power. While the traditional political scientists may argue and have in fact argued and questioned, over the last twenty years, the meaning of such politics, the meaning is clear today. The power that the politics of powerlessness wields is greater than the powers of a State.

J.P.'s greatest achievement in the seventies was thus not the toppling of a government but that he could prove that the power of a people could be even more than that of a government. J.P. had led the people against the government and had become more powerful than the latter. Many would argue in this context that it is not a healthy phenomenon that an individual, even while leading the people, would be more powerful than an institution, be that a government or a party. True, the objection is valid, yet such validity would be limited in a situation such as J.P.'s mainly because the person concerned does not wield power; he only leads people upto a point, the point of a second choice in this case. He then abdicates voluntarily and the source of his power lies in his state of powerlessness. His refusal to wield power is, in fact, the source of his power.

It is this strange nation of power and its relationship with victims of a system—it is this new concept of power and powerlessness—that provide the elan vital of the new politics, a politics that provided the running inspiration for J.P.'s magnificent career all through It is this politics that J.P. seeks to establish by changing the values of the dominant political organisation, namely, the state in a country.

There is a third myth about J.P. It is that J.P. shines is matters of traditional politics and that he had missed his vocation during the last thirty years. "Had he been in politics," "Had he

just not deserted the political field," are the 'ifs' that one always heard about J.P. and hears them all the more now.

Some of us feel that the contrary is true. J.P. is a misfit in traditional politics. His natural inclination is not only not to run aways from power, but to trust the other party implicitly. During the movement, all through, he had this trust, so grossly misplaced, in the other party. He had hoped that a better sense would prevail on those who were opposing his cause and everything will end well. Never did he for a moment entertain the idea, as his opponents had felt, that he was to become a threat to a person in office. Yet this is not the central issue about J.P.

III

The central issue is the new society. J.P. has been engaged in the last thirty years in the search for a new set-up in society and a value-system suited to it. While we shall refer to the meaning of the new value more fully somewhat later, it is necessary to state that J.P.'s search for the values has been personal as well as social, positive as well as negative. He has done so both by setting up personal examples, as also by hitting against by existing value system with a skilled strategy. In the matter of the establishment of a new value-system Vinoba, of course, is important. But Vinoba by social category is a non-citizen, one who is not meant for politics. He is meant in fact to remain outside the traditional system. J.P. is different. He is a politicai leader *per se*. In his later career, when he proved that a tried political leader of his stature could find the new value-system as more appropriate for our political structure, it is a contribution that J.P. alone could make. It is he alone who could thus provide the articulate elite of the country with the goal of a new value-system, a new society and a new politics. J.P. thus provides a bridge between the Western-trained 'pragmatism'-oriented elite and the values of the new society. It is in the pleading for this new value-system that J.P. provided his strategy of attack of the traditional values of the society and politics of the elite.

J.P. has also sought to acquire, with care, the raw materials that would provide the constructs of a new system that the new values would project. He has done so by trying to create a new school of social sciences, and a new movement for social

reconstruction. He has done so by taking on ground a massive programme of Gramdan and Gramswarajya in Bihar as also by typing to establish a link between the new tools and values created by these experiments with the macro-politics of the traditional style.

His contribution to the Peace Mission in Nagaland, his success in the initiation of new thinking in Kashmir affairs, his own bold attempts for the removal of attitudinal barriers in Indo-Pak relations and his plunge, whole-hog, in the movement for the liberation of Bangla Desh provide some testimony of his purely personal struggle for the achievement of the new value-system in the macro-politics of the country. It is incumbent on the new leaders of the government and the ruling party to make full estimate of J.P.'s role in these spheres and to build a new policy of external relations based on the new value-system that we have talked of. The mainstay of a foreign policy, as also of internal administration, that deals with apparently incompatible groups is provided by a single words. It is 'trust'. The guiding principle in this matter, as elsewhere in J.P.'s politics, is again, not power, not balance of power, and certainly not dominance in power relations, but mutual trust and self-respect. The central thrust in this regard is not provided by national will for dominance but by the urge for adjustment and harmony as in the case of the power system itself referred to earlier. This also is the meaning of the new value-system.

If the Carter Administration in the United States today is moving towards this type of a policy in international relations, J.P. had given the lead in the direction several years ago. There is no reason to believe that the people in power at New Delhi will not pursue a similar policy. In fact they will, as is evident in their dealing with Bangla Desh which has created an enormous surfeit of goodwill in that country for the present rulers of India.

Where does the new value-system come from ? It stems from J.P.'s conviction that scientific approaches to social problems and social experiments conducted on the basis of the insights provided by social sciences could provide a more natural and moral goal. For two decades and a half J.P. has thus experimented both with social sciences as also with programmes of rural reconstruction. His contributions to these fields are not loud and spectacular but silent and lasting. The projects were his laboratories and schools

of learning. What Shantiniketan was to Tagore the projects were to him. It is he who has learned from the villagers as much as the villagers from him. For all these years J.P. has also conducted dialogue in some manner or the other with almost all social scientists of the country, high and low. He has similarly discussed issues with almost every social worker engaged in any aspect of work in India.

However, unimporatant the theorist or the practitioner was, J.P. approached him with a great deal of respect and honour which, in turn, had showed how great was his respect for both theory and practice. In effecting this amalgam between theory and practice, between research and action, as also between the modern elite and the masses of the country, J.P.'s contribution is probably unique and distinctive. It is in the process of this experiment and strenght that J.P. had also drawn his own conclusions about social theories which must have been responsible, to a great extent, for the 'conviction' he has displayed in all his micro experiments. Then came the phase of the application of his theories, born out of his contacts with masses, villages, intellectuals and laboratories in Sokhodeora and Musahari, and finally the 'long dialogue' that he had sought to establish with the people of India in every part of the country during the course of his movement.

These importants of the social field had prepared J.P. for the role he played later in changing the climate of the country. J.P. was a leader of Indian politics These activities made him the leader of the Indian society. By the sixties, J.P. had in fact become the conscience of the nation. But these activities were never considered by the 'power' groups of the country as contribution to politics. Most of what J.P. was doing was, in fact, considered to have belonged outside the field of traditional politics. Yet only a few could see that the traditional politics was itself changing in his hands. Similarly, it was only a few people that had realised that, although the new social force that J.P. had created lay apparently scattered and purposeless, they were gaining a momentum. It is they that thus ultimately gathered strength and demolished the fabric of the traditional politics in India. For never has, in Indian history, the elite and the masses spoken in one voice with great dismay against the government as during the last elections of which the total revolution was the forerunner. The closing up

of ranks between the elite and the masses had become a tremendous social force directed against the political structure at Delhi Mrs. Gandhi's collapse in 1977, is indeed symbolic of the demise of traditional politics in India. The sooner the new leaders of the nation realise the significance of the great defeat of traditional politics that Mrs. Gandhi has symbolised in her fall, the better will it be for the people

One more question about J.P. : Has his task been done ? Is J.P.'s role more or less over ? Should he now retire from active life ? To the present author, J.P. has yet a long way to go. The tasks he has to complete are many. To list only a few : it is the establishment of a moral code of politics, socialisation of the process of power game bridging effectively the gap between the people and the elite; and the establishment of the new style of politics, that he has introduced as the order of the day. The most important of it all is the last. The new politics, a product of the new value-system, will have to become a part of India's political culture. Who will do it ? But J.P. ? The Rashtrpati's desire of shifting to a new house, Morarjibhai's code of conduct evident in almost all his political behaviour makes it evident that J.P. will not be the only one who would gamble his all to estiblish a new moral code in the field of traditional politics. But, among all the three mentioned just now, history will place the primary responsibility for the creation of the new system on J.P. For a Prime Minister, however saintly he is—and probably Morarji will prove that even a saint can be a good Prime Minister—will have to make many compromises in the conduct of day-to-day affairs. So also will a President be engrossed with many acts of the State which will give very little time for rethinking and experiments. But J P. will have their sympathy—a thing that J.P.'s great mentor did not have from his colleagues in the forties (1947).

It is with the sympathy of the leaders of the State that J.P will have to attack the structure of traditional society and politics and place "morals" and "masses" at the centre of it all

The total revolution has brought a psychological change in India. J.P.'s "constructive work" has also pushed to the fore the image of a new value-system. All this is true. But, the goals of the latter have not yet been integrated in the new social functions of the State. This task, not a small task in any manner, is still to be attended to. The creation of a new style of politics, if not a

whole new infrastructure of social values, is necessary to institutionalise the new politics of which J.P. has stood for all these days. For long has politics followed the course of pragmatism, for long has society been a tool of the elite. From after Gandhi's death both politics and society had lost their moral fibre. J.P.'s induction of a value-oriented movement had opened a new chapter in the politics of the country. But, it is only a chapter, the book is yet to be completed. When this is done and a new value-system comes to occupy the central place in Indian society and politics, it is only then that J.P.'s tasks will be accomplished—his revolution completed.

power. To stay on power she had to adopt devious and dishonest methods. One of these was the way she cheated the poor and the gullible by trading on populism and promises which really were like post-dated cheques on a crashing bank.'

All this worried JP even as it did all thinking persons all over the country. In addition, JP did not approve of the way Mrs. Gandhi tried to perpetuate all such unhealthy trends by grooming her son Sanjay, alredy following in her foosteps, to inherit the power she had amassed. JP felt that she had no moral scruples about anything. This become evident when she did not hesitate to temper with even the Indian Constitution in order to make herself supreme. She considered herself modern but to JP her thinking seemed medieval, to say the least. Ever gentle to his opponents, JP once remarked that "she can also be vindictive".

So JP felt that, primarily, Mrs. Gandhi's onslaught on the Constitutions was a very serious matter. It was not only ill-concieved but was dangerous for a society still in transition and liable to threats of aggression from without and within, JP was of the view that any changes desired in the Constitution should be achieved only by applying the democratic processes and not on the strength of the brute majority Mrs. Gandhi had in Parliament, which made a mockery of parliamentary democracy itself. If Mrs. Gandhi wanted to tackle national imperatives, JP felt the way to do it was by defining and refining the ends and means she wished to adopt of what she believed to be national objectives, a thing already lucidly outlined in the Preamble and the Directive chapters of the Indian Constitution. For, JP believed that with all its faults the Indian Constitution alone for the time being, provided the bedrock of an ideology based on which socio-economic transformation could be achieved. Therefore, JP felt, if Mrs. Gandhi wished to take the nation forward, the method was not by populism, politicking or politicalising of issues. Neither could the adoption of make-shift and *ad hoc* policies or attacking the Constitution for one's own failure to tackle problems, help. What was needed to be done by Mrs Gandhi was to make a restatement of national objectives as conceived by her and her party, to redefine the means to do this and then to do it by seeking and enlisting people's co-operation. JP felt that it was absolutely open to her and her Congress Party to do all this and more, all within the ambit of the Constitution itself which was supreme. He felt that

a threat to the Constitution would mean anarchy, specially with the threat which Communism and Russian designs also posed. And whatever else JP was, he was no anarchist. What JP objected to was, Mrs. Gandhi and her "Congress Culture" stooping low to use ignoble means to attain her ends, all of which posed a bad example to the body politic. But Mrs. Gandhi's only reaction to all such sound advice was to brush off JP as a CIA agent !

JP, like Gandhiji before him and like Solzhenitsyn his contemporary, was worried over the ever expanding forms of run-away technology which necessitated large grouping together of men, inevitably leading them to think collectively which in turn tended to dwarf and eclipse man the individual and to stultify his spirit. JP felt that the so-called "Congress culture" over which Mrs. Gandhi presided and which held sway since freedom, not having grasped or taken note of this vital fact, was itself becoming instrumental in stifling man's stature and personality. Inspite of her lip service to Gandhi and Nehru, Mrs. Gandhi and her Congress culture had closed their minds to their ideals, philosophy and practical application. To stay in power Mrs. Gandhi had to pervert their meaning. For instance, Gandhiji and the founding fathers of the Constitution had believed in and had prescribed the principle of one-man-one vote to serve as an instrument of adult education of the vast masses, both for their personality development as well as to improve the quality of democracy. But, the Congress developed vested interests. It ceased to be a unifying force. Instead, it developed divisive policies in dealing with problems like those confronting the minorities, women, the backward classes and others. So Mrs. Gandhi and her Congress had to politicalise the elections and to build lobbies of sectors of the electorate in order to provide themselves with the "vote banks" that have now become a hardened feature of our election. But in the process, however, the Congress could not avoid adopting corrupt practices. By thus vitiating the voting process, the Congress itself become an instrument, not of growth or emancipation of the Indian masses but of subjugating them, to warp their outlook and to dim their vision to be patriotic and loyal citizens of the country. JP felt that in this way a fairly satisfactory, democratic electoral system provided by the Constitution was fast being reduced to a farce by the Congress under Mrs. Gandhi. So, too, JP felt, was the case with our parliamentary democracy.

Insisdiously and methodically, a truly representative, two-party parlimentary system came to be dominated by the Congress, monolith reducing it to a one party system with the opposition reduced to a microscopic and ineffective minority. Within the party itself, too, intra-party democracy was being eroded, tending to make Mrs. Gandhi supreme. All this was helping Mrs. Gandhi to become indispensable and dictatorial and her Congress Party to dominate Parliament in order to stay in power. At the same time, the dividing lines between Party and the Government were becoming obliterated. All this set JP furiously thinking about a system of "party-less democracy" as an alternative to Parliamentary Democracy. But JP felt that the time was pre-mature, though Indian democracy was mature, to bring about a smooth conversion of one system into another. So he deferred developing this further. Instead, JP felt that he should concentrate on protecting the two-party system itself from collapse and total destruction. For, JP felt that in a diverse country like India, this system with the Government of the Union as its apex, still retained its utility primarily as an All-India law-making body. Even to bring about a party-less democracy, appropriate laws had to be passed by a central national authority. Such an authority, JP felt, was for the time being the Parliament itself, which could make amendments to the Constitution but with the people's consent. Therefore, JP concentracted on upholding the integrity of parliamentary democracy, which Mrs. Gandhi was trying to break. He felt that democracy had to become a bit more strong first. So, it "take over" by the creeping dictatorship of Mrs. Gandhi and her caucus supported by the "Congress culture" had to be prevented at all cost.

Apart from the damage which Mrs. Gandhi and the Congress caucus were causing to the system of Government, JP felt that Mrs. Gandhi was mismanaging the country's economy also. The mixed economy policy, originally propounded by Mr. Nehru, was reduced to a strange conglomoration. Rural economy suffered complete neglect. Mrs. Gandhi and her Congress, not being able to make any policy contributions of their own, tried to make a rehash out of the policies of highly developed nations—the super powers—in the name of modernization of the economy ! This was done without reference whatsoever to the people of rural India and without ascertaining as to the extent to which they were capable

of absorbing the benefits of such economy, if any. This rehash contained the evil features of both the State Capitalism of Russia as well as the Consumer Capitalism of America. All this left only a microscopic share for the adoption of the more realistic policies of the Gandhian economy, under which it was generally believed that greater good could be achieved for a larger number. JP thus felt that Mrs. Gandhi's shilly-shally economic policies only went to increase the chasm between the rich and the poor. JP said in a letter to Mrs. Gandhi, as published in his *Prison Diary*, "Your whole approach to politics and economics will have to change." For JP believed that Gandhian economy laid stress on more production with dignity of labour But this production should just suffice for balanced consumption and equitable distribution. It also laid greater stress on dispersal of industries and reduction in concentration of labour. It believed in self-employment to a greater degree which would impart dignity to labour without reducing this country to a nation of mere wage-earners working under duress. JP's emphasis too like Gandhiji was that greater attention should be paid to the development of a self-reliant rural economy. Also, JP further developed Gandhiji's ideas on Trusteeship in Industry in order to reduce employer-employee tensions and to help improve relations between labour and industry, which problems successive Congress Governments had failed to solve. But Mrs. Gandhi, in her short-sightedness, spurned all such wisdom, much to the detriment of this country and its people.

So, too, Mrs. Gandhi had no use for what JP had to say about devolution and decentralisation of political and economic power with greater autonomy to the States under the principles of federalism. She did nothing to strengthen local self-government institutions or the Panchapati Raj system at the grass root levels. This was because Mrs. Gandhi felt that such steps would by shifting the power base to the people themselves, and beeome a threat to her personal power. So she began to take the country's affairs in a diametrically opposite direction She began to reverse even that limited measure of state autonomy enjoyed by the State under principles provided in the Constitution, by interferring in their internal affairs. She encouraged supercession of Municipalities and Corporations and bureaucratised the Panchayati Raj system. Thus, she took her government towards more and more autocratic centralism. This JP could not bring himself to approve.

All these constituted the vital differences on matters of principle on which JP's ideas clashed with Mrs. Gandhi's. Many of them were reconciliable, if only Mrs. Gandhi chose to be advised and guided by her equals and betters. But it was not in Mrs. Gandhi's nature to be so amiable, but only to become wise after the event, if at all ! However, for JP, it was the last straw when Mrs. Gandhi began to temper with the Constitution, wantonly and deliberately, in a serious attempt to constitutionally assume dictatorial powers. From the point onward began the head-on collision between JP and Mrs. Gandhi. What followed therefore is history.

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THE TRUE SUCCESS

M.R. Masani

Whatever the future might hold for him, J.P. has accomplished a great part of his mission in life. As Gandhi liberated India from foreign rule, J.P. was India's 'second liberator' from domestic despotism. He has by no means achieved the 'total revolution' to which he has aspired but he has certainly accomplished the first part of his mission, namely, to restore democratic processes and a free society in which the rest of the revolution could perhaps be peacefully accomplished.

J.P.'s own understanding of the extent to which his mission has been accomplished found expression in the course of his reply to a question I put to him on 2 June 1977, in Bombay asking him to define what had already been achieved and what still remained to be done. Here is his answer :

> The most important achievement for which I cannot take the entire credit is the unprecedented mass awakening, particularly the awakening among the youth. The task that remains to be done is to win the resurgent people's and youth power for changing constructively Indian society in its entirety. The scope of this change would cover several aspects of the people's life including their polity, economy, their social customs, the removal of the growing dichotomy between rural and urban, agricultural and industrial and the development of an agro-industrial pattern of economy and society. Further it

would include a drastic revolution in our system of education as well as our system of administration. I have mentioned only a few important facts but the total revolution to transformation should cover much more of the people's life leaving no aspect untouched.

I then went on to observe that JP had quite rightly been credited with the largest individual contribution towards the achievement of a change of Government as a result of the last Parliamentary Elections and to ask in what way it would be possible for him to influence those in office to behave in a manner that conformed to the standards he had led the people to expect of them.

In his reply JP demurred to some extent regarding the credit I had given him. He said :

> Whetever my contribution or the contributions of other individuals might have been to the change in Government, most of the credit goes to the people themselves. I do not think it is a victory of any party or coalition of parties but a victory of the people who consciously voted for democracy against dictatorship and proved wrong all those learned persons who thought that the poverty-striken, uneducated masses could have no appreciation of the values of individual liberty or democracy.

Proceeding to answer my question JP observed :

> As far as influencing Government's behaviour is concerned I rely mostly on the power of the masses. By that I do not mean a rabble shouting slogans at Ministers' residences and Secretariats, but a peaceful, organised expression, in democratic ways, of the will and wish of the people.
> The only way I can influence those in office to behave in a manner that conforms to the standards I have led the people to expect is by writing and talking to personal friends in office or in a position to influence the course of events.

'Indian democracy in its present form', JP had said in one of his statements reported in the press in May 1977, 'will continue,

about that there should be no doubt—now. While that continues, the real democracy, the people's democracy from below, can be built up.'

But can it ? A nagging doubt presists. For instance, J.P. had expressed the hope to Mr. Chanchal Sarkar who wrote about it in an article in the *Hindustan Times* on April 30, that when the State Assembly elections came, he wanted to 'begin his movement for electoral reform by asking villages to elect representatives to an electoral college which would then nominate a candidate for the election.' What a sad contrast was to be presented when those elections actually materialised in the month of June 1977 !

Can Jayaprakash keep those whom he has put in power on the straight and narrow path of virtue ? Can he continue to influence those in office without getting tarred with their brush in the eyes of the people ? Will he be able to hold those concerned to the pledge they took in this presence in New Delhi on 24 March to practise 'austerity and honesty in personal and public life' and 'to endeavour sincerely to fulfil the task that he (Gandhi) began' ?

Then again, the question arises, how much time does JP have ? Time is a gift for someone in his state of health.

In this context I asked JP, now that he had claimed at the end of his visit to the United States that he had been given a new lease of life, how he proposed to utilise this opportunity within the constraints which the state of his health would impose on him ? To this, JP's reply was :

> I do not know if my health would be restored sufficiently to allow me to go around the country for that is one way in which I have tried to create public opinion, educate the masses, and organise to some extent the youth, particularly students. Without daring to draw any comparison, I think I will have to sit at one place like Gandhiji and by meeting people who come there to consult me and by writing, I shall try to exert such influence as I may be capable of.

This much is true—that all through the vicissitudes and zig-zags of JP's life there has throughout been an internal consistency. JP has tried to place Man in the centre of the picture. It is a part of the Indian tradition that he has sought to revive and whether or not he succeeds in this will depend on the people of

India.

JP's faith in Man was in a way vindicated by the results of the Parliamentary elections of March 1977, which testified to the awareness and intelligence of the illiterate Indian voter about the values of human dignity and freedom. It is, of course, a negative achievement. What takes the place of the old regime will, in the course of time, turn out to be crucial. For JP, what has happened can only be a beginning.

Quite apart from what he has achieved in India, the impact of JP's achievement in the world at large has been profound. President Jimmy Carter was to recognise this achievement when, in the course of a message he was to send to JP in May 1977, when JP was in the United States for health reasons, he said: 'Your devotion to freedom and democracy has inspired us all.' JP's response to this act of solidarity was a message he sent back to President Carter in the course of which he said :

> Over the past months you have been very much in my thoughts for the courageous manner in which you have dedicated yourself to many questions involving international peace, human freedom and co-operation among nations. I send you my best wishes for your success in the noble tasks you have set before yourself.

It is not given to liberators, as it was not to Gandhi, to reach the end of the road. Unless and until man is perfect, no such achievement can be considered possible. However, many years JP may be spared to us, it is not likely that he will recognise in the realities of his day the kind of society of which he was dreamt.

Enough for him, perhaps, to recall the words of Robert Louis Stevenson in that beautiful essay 'El Dorado :

> Oh toiling hands of mortals ! Oh wearied feet, travelling ye know not whither. Soon, soon, it seems to you, you must come forth to some conspicuous hill top and a little way further, against the setting sun, discry the spires of El Dorado. Little do ye know your own blessedness, for to travel hopefully is a better think than to arrive and the true success is to labour.

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JP's COMMUNITARIAN POLITY : A CRITIQUE

V. T. PATIL AND I. A. LOKAPUR

Jayaprakash Narayan as a political thinker and social reformer was seriously concerned about the state of Indian democracy. He was aware of the socio-political and economic ills that had distorted the developmental process of the Indian polity. As a visionary and an idealist, JP came out with a bold formulation at the conceptual and practical level in terms of his concepts of Communitarian Polity Down below we shall be critically examining the philosophy, structure and process of his Communitarian Polity.

JP, as a very perceptive analyst of the various elements of Indian society, discussed the problems of capitalism, industrialisation, the ills of parliamentary democracy, rural reconstruction and economic growth. His framework of analysis was very comprehensive and the primary focus of his discussion was to build the community where men would interact with each other in a creative and fruitful manner, for the allround development of their material and moral life. JP reasoned that India was suffering from a sense of endemic failure, since those in power were completely mistaken in their belief that state power derived from a grafted system of western democracy as against mass movements through mass participation. He was of the opinion that there was lukewarm participation of the masses in official programmes of development because those in power did not possess the moral stature and dedication to a cause. In the absence of these

prerequisites, it would be illusory to expect that law could change society, that men through conversion and persuation could achieve such a goal.[1]

DISENCHANTMENT WITH WEST

JP's wide-ranging mind regarded the industrial civilization of the west as an anachronism which, on the one hand, had created huge urban centres wherein the atomistic individual was like a small grain of sand on the sea shore. This process of development led to elimination of individuals who, in effect, were transformed into nameless digits in a statistical democracy. Such a democracy was a bottleneck in the development of face community. JP was pragmatic enough to realise that the atomisation of society had reached a point of no return because of different conditions prevailing in India. The villages provided a potent source and a physical basis on which genuine communities could be established without much difficulty.

JP was dissatisfied with the western model of democracy and in its place he opted for a system of participatory democracy in which the people would have the sovereign power, and hence, to a certain extent, it would prevent the emergence of totalitarianism. He regarded democracy as a moral problem. He recommended the development of certain moral and spiritual quality of man and educability of human nature JP was confronted with the problem of reconciling the liberty of individuals with the power of the state. If too much of liberty was given to individuals it led to excesses and its misuse, while, on the other hand, if the state was allowed to interfere too much it would lead to curtailment of individual liberties. His task was to resolve this dichotomy by suggesting an equitable solution.

PLEA FOR PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

In line with the task before him, he suggested that a participatory democracy would be the best solution under the circumstances. Such a course of action would strengthen the base of democracy, so that if those in the top did not function properly, those in the base would endeavour and predominate to ensure a stable foundation for a secular democracy. This emphasis on

grassroot democrdtic institutions could go a long way in strengthening the basic structures of a participatory democracy.[2]

THE NATURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE COMMUNITARIAN SYSTEM

It was JP's contention that in ancient India the village and town communities functioned independently of the central state. The democracy of the villages was of a stable nature which endured for many centuries in Indian history. 'Community', 'self-development and self-regulation' of community life were dominant features of ancient Indian polity.

The basic concept in ancient times in India was the 'Community' which took two forms.[3] In the first place, there was the territorial community which made up the village. Over many centuries of evolution these small village communities were interjected to make a kingdom or republic. In the second place, there was the functional or occupational community based on the *Varna* system. On the basis of the four *Varnas* various persons performed certain specific functions by following the same occupations and leading a common way of life. Many scholars have provided a theoretical and practical justification for these functional communities based on the *Varna* system. JP supported the idea of a functional community because he felt that it was woven into the warp and woof of Indian society. He believed that an 'organically self-determining, self-developing communal life' was very closely related to the social genius of India. JP also argued in favour of the concept of *Dharma* which pervaded the life of ancient village communities in India. The concept of *Dharma* was made up of rules and regulations as part of social ethics regulating the life in village communities.

In the course of his discussion on the development of a Communitarian Polity, JP has taken the view that man was a social animal and that he had an organic relationship with the society. He took umbrage with modern western democracy because it constituted a fundamental rejection of the social nature of man. In such a conception man turned out to be a cog in the wheel, an abstracted and atomised individual who used a separate

existence from the society of which he was a part. A democratic system was dependent upon the atomised voter who did not have an organic relationship with the rest of the society but was expected to be an instrument of a democratic system which placed primary emphasis on arithmetical calculation of votes. In view of these reasons, JP rejected the western model and argued in favour of a Communitarian Polity based on his concept of community.

JP's Ideal Community

According to JP, in a genuine community there was a real commonality of interests between different individuals based on the values of sharing, participation and fellowship. In a community, according to JP :

> "there is identity of interest; a feeling of unity in the midst of diversity : a sense of freedom within the framework of accepted social responsibilities, differentiation of functions converging to the single goal of the good of the community and its members, caste, class, race, religion, politics—all these divide men into different, often conflicting groups. The community brings them together, unites them and harmonises their interests. In the community agriculture, industry, capital, labour, skill and intelligence are not at loggerheads with one another, but are synthesised in the service of the community. Production and consumption are not two contra-posed sides of an economic bargain manipulated by distant agencies, but an integrated process serving a single and direct purpose. The community is built up of personal relationships, and choice and free will have their play within the limits of self-imposed discipline and common culture. In community, there is understanding and participation by the members in all communal affairs. The community is a co-operative society, but the difference between it and the ordinary co-operative society is that co-operation in the community embraces the whole of life, rather than only its economic sector and all the members of the community rather than only those who purchase shares. Every one in the community has a share in its fortunes and misfortunes. In its internal matters the community is self-regulating and self-determining. Division is poison for the community, so the endeavour always is to

seek the highest common denominator"[4]

Community in Ancient India

JP did not imply that such an ideal community existed during the ancient period nor was he arguing that society was organised into small village communities that automatically brought about a qualitative improvement in human life. In fact, JP was only referring to an ideal community which human beings had to strive for allround progress.

The Primary Community

JP rejected the argument that small rural communities may have had relevance in the past, but in this age of industrialisation they would only turn out to be anachronisms. JP emphatically stated that "dichotomy between rural and urban is false and unscientific."[5] He was of the view that agriculture and industry were two faces of the same coin and both of them were necessary for human advancement. Industrialisation disrupted the steady life of human societies, eliminated man from fellow-beings, created economic and political Leviathans in which human beings would be completely lost since they would merely become cogs in the wheels of progress. Hence, JP said his society would neither be 'urban' nor 'rural' but it would be Communitarian. Such small communities were called as Primary Communities by JP. The Primary Community was a natural growth, while its size varied depending upon a number of other factors. Nevertheless, the Primary Community was not so small as to hinder the balance of development of communal and cultural life of the community, nor was it expected to be so large as to impersonalise the life of the community. JP equated the Primary Community with the 'revenue village' which had a specific definition, usually consisting of a number of hamlets with the inhabitants leading a community life in a spirit of understanding and co-operation.[6]

The Regional Community

The next layer of society would be made up of the Regional Community, according to JP. As in the case of the local Primary Community, the Regional Communities must co-operate with each other with a view to deal with common problems and promote common aims. Meaningful co-operation and co-ordination of

activities was posible between neighbouring communities. Every Primary Community would be able to do certain things through its own resources. Yet, there could be certain things which would be beyond the resources and competence of the Primary Community. In such a process the Regional Community, being the product of an organic process of growth was an integrated community.[7]

The District Community

The next step in the development of an integrated society was the District Community. The Regional Community would do all that was in its competence, but here again there could be many things beyond its competence and resources. In such cases the Regional Communities would have to come together and form an integrated community known as the District Community.

The National Community

The District Communities, in their turn, would come together and form the Provincial Community and the Provincial Communities would federate together to form the National Community. It should be obvious from the above discussion that communal life and organisation moved from the inner to the outer circles which can be illustrated diagramatically with the help of concentric circles. The social organisation envisaged in such a set up was one of self-governing communities where each individual would be enabled to escape from robotism by the freedom and recognition as a member of the community.

JP'S CRITIQUE OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

JP then applied his mind to the nature and substance of political institutions which led him to a critique of parliamentary democracy. He debunked the idea that a government under parliamentary democracy was representative of the wishes of the majority of the voters if not of all the people. He unequivocally stated that this was not true because governments elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage in reality represented the opinion of a minority of the voters. In the second place, it was common

knowledge that mass elections were controlled and manipulated by powerful political parties with unlimited financial resources at their command, while the electorate was made to play second fiddle to the forces and vested interests controlling political parties and propaganda machines.

In the third place, demagoguery resulted in each political party indulging in half-truths by making false and dishonest promises merely to excite the base passions of the public. Public issues were rarely presented to the people in their true light, consequently national interests were sacrificed at the alter of demagoguery. In the fourth place, democracy suffered from the inherent tendency towards centralism. The complexities of the age of science and technology which were beyond the comprehension of ordinary citizens, have created a centralised state of overwhelming power and resources in which the people were reduced to object helplessness. In such a system power was not in the hands of the people but was controlled by organised vested interests such as capitalists, powerful labour unions, etc. In the fifth place, a natural corollary of immense concentration of power and administration was the growth of a system of bureaucracy. This has resulted in the growth of autocracy of the bureaucracy. The only way to prevent such an occurrence was to adopt a policy of decentralisation that provided opportunity to people to participate in the administration of their affairs since as the sovereign people they had the ultimate power to control the bureacracy.

In the sixth place, JP also severly criticised the functioning of the party system. Neither the citizens nor the rank and file had any role in policy-making or in the internal administration of the parties. Inner party democracy was lacking as most of these parties were operated by caucuses that give primacy to their own interests rather than the interests of the society at large. In effect, parties created the illusion of democracy and self-government which in itself was a negation of real democracy. In the seventh place, JP was very critical of the system of election under parliamentary democracy. He took the position that the system was very expensive and wasteful which an underdeveloped country could not afford to indulge in. In such a situation, democracy became the tool of propertied interests and money power without resulting in much public good.[8]

JP Concept of the Communitarian Economy

JP also applied his mind to picture the economy of the community. The fundamental principles-governing the community's economy were conditioned by the fact that it was non-exploitative and non-competitive. The emphasis was more on co-operation and co-sharing and less on expropriating the profits by a particular section of the society. JP was of the opinion that community must develop all the facets of human life. Hence, the economy of the community must not only lead to the enrichment but a balanced development of human life. The communitarian economy would neither be 'an economy of unlimited wants' nor would it be 'wasteful'.[9] Further, the economy of the community would be self-sufficient to the extent possible and work in co-operative harmony with nature.

Planning

JP regarded it as an inescapable truth for the community to first engage in 'production for self-consumption or consumption within the community'.[10] Planning in such a scheme of things would begin from the primary community and move to the outward circles which marked the various steps in the organisation of the communitarian polity. In such a community, all the natural resources would belong to the community and each primary community would own all the land that fell within its jurisdiction. Economic inequality or disparity between the people living in the community would be kept within reasonable limits. This idea was based on the assumption that economic inequality was contrary to the canons of the communitarian polity.

In such a community the worker would have a central position since work was an important requirement for the progress of the communnity. Without work no community could exist in an effective manner. The worker would not be a mere automation indulging in senseless drudgery. Being a very effective participant in the agro-industrial aspects of the communal life, he would find ample scope for suitable expression of his human powers. This only implied that in respect of the organisation of industry and commerce, it would mostly be agro-industrial in character in consonance with "a new kind of technology, adopted to the scale of man".[11] The economic institutions in the different communities of the Communitarian Polity would be of three types, namely, private,

co-operative and communal. The principle of self-government in industry would be a dominating factor of the communitarian economy. JP also was clear in his mind that class war and confrontation between the workers and the capitalists were alien to the communitarian order of society. Strikes, lockouts, etc., did not have any place in the communitarian pattern of life. Every economic institution would be integrated in a spirit of harmony and co-operation with the community In each community area of district, region, etc., every aspect of industry would be organised on the basis of organisations, owners, workers, managers and technicians. The associations would be federated into Economic Council having wide-ranging powers. They would have powers to regulate and govern the activities of member institutions in such a manner that there was no conflict with the rules and laws of the community.

Structure of the Communitarian Polity

JP argued very forcefully that the foundation of his Communitarian Polity was based on 'self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial and urbo-rural, local communities'.[12] He felt that a good beginning was made through the establishment of *Gram Panchayats* and programmes of Community Development. But, he was not satisfied with these officially sponsored schemes of rural development as they suffered from serious flaws. These programmes were not fully thought out and therefore were lacking in an integrated social philosophy without a definite concept of community. Nor did they seek to maintain a harmonious balance in the community between the agricultural and industrial sectors. Power was expected to flow from bottom upwards, but the fact was that at the higher levels it sought to ape the industrial society of the West which atomised the individual for all practical purposes.[13]

According to JP, the foundation of his Communitarian Polity depended very much on self-governing, self-sufficient, agro-industrial rural communities.[14] In the local community the *Gram Sabha* consisting of all the adults would be the highest political institution. On the question of selection of *panchayat* two methods were suggested by JP. One was the method of general consensus of opinion in the *Gram Sabha* and the other was that of drawing lots. JP favoured a large quantum of freedom to the villages through a positive process of devolution and decentralisation. The *Gram Sabha* and

its *panchayat* could take the responsibility of providing food, shelter, primary education, primary medical care and sanitation. He also felt that it was necessary for some time at least to provide help from above to the villages. But, he said that such help should only be given when the villages themselves were prepared to do their best to help themselves. Obviously, larger communal organisations like the Regional Community, State and National Government have a significant role to play in his particular area.

The next stage of the political structure was made up by the Regional Community. In such a process the *Gram Panchayat* would be integrated into a *Panchayat Samiti*. The *Samiti* would have the powers and obligations of an autonomous self-governing community. It was expected to play an instrumental role in the politico-economic life of the country. The *Panchayat Samiti* would be elected by the *Gram Panchayats* and not by their adult members. This was based on the consideration that the *Gram Panchayat* as a representative body represented the village community and not its members. Thus, the *Panchayat Samiti* was a representative body of different *Gram Panchayats*. Above this structure was the District Council which was made up through the integration of all the *Panchayat Samitis* of the district. In a like manner all the District Councils in the state would be integrated to form the State Assembly. The State Assemblies, in a similar manner, would make up the *Lok Sabha*. In essence, political institutions at each level were the result of integration of all institutions at a lower level.

Legislative Powers

In respect of the exercise of legislative powers, JP provided for full autonomy to each community in formulating rules and regulations for the management of their internal affairs, subject to the condition that such affairs did not affect or interfere with the powers and functions of the communities at higher levels. JP visualised that these communities in the exercise of their powers would appoint a number of committees to facilitate co-ordination and speedy disposal of work. Over and above these different communities, there would be a Central Co-ordinating Committee which would be made up of one representative from each community. Every committee would function on the principle of collective responsibility while the committee as a whole would be responsible for the execution of policies. It should be clear from the above that

the Central Co-ordinating Committtee would be a government conducted by committees of representative bodies. There would be no institution of Prime Minister or Chief Minister or Minister since that would lead to concentration of too much of power in the hands of a few individuals. However, there would be the office of the President for various representative communal bodies without any administrative functions He would have extraordinary emergency powers and his duty would be operate the representative body as per rules and regulations laid down in this regard. The President of the *Rashtra Sabha* also would be the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

Bureaucracy

Since the administration would be carried on by the communities sufficient number of civil servants would be necessary to discharge their enormous responsibilities. It would be the prerogative of the communities to appoint and dismiss their civil servants. The administration in such a set up cannot be top heavy since their would be a large quantum of decentralisation of powers.[15] Further, JP also felt that the problems of bureaucracy and corruption could be, handled effectively since the people would provide direct supervision over the civil servants through their elected bodies. JP also examined the issue of communal representative bodies and members themselves taking to corruption, nepotism, etc. He felt that as there would be close and direct relationship between the people's representatives and the civil servants the necessary corrective measures could be taken without much delay.

JP was also concerned with the question of what departments of administration were to be given to which community. He held the view that each community must have powers that were natural to its existence and well-being. He was in favour of decentralisation to the maximum extent Hence, he said that such departments as taxation, justice, planning, etc., should be entrusted to the communities. JP knew that any construction of a new political structure envisaged by him would have to be built from below floor bv floor. Simultaneously, the economic structure would also have to be refashioned to be in line with the changed political structure. All this would require enormous time and energy on the part of dedicated individuals imbued with a sense of missionery zeal to

improve that life of the community. Thus, it may be said that there would have to be a period of transition. The crux of the problem was to create the 'spirit of community' which would ensure the toning up of the body politic from its passive state to that of a dynamic state.

JP'S COMMUNITARIAN POLITY : A CRITICAL EVALUATION

In this part we shall develop a framework of criticism of the Communitarian Polity envisaged by JP. However, the task is not an easy one for a number of reasons. The main difficulty with JP was that this concept of Communitarian Polity lacked a specific political theory or philosophy. JP at the theoretical level frequently shifted his analysis between three models without consistently sticking to any particular theoretical construct. The three models which JP used in his discussion were the Marxian Socialist model, the Liberal Democratic model and finally the indigenous Gandhian model. It may be pointed out here that JP was deeply influenced by all the three models and hence his Communitarian Polity was a distinct and specific conglomeration of these three influences.

It would be very interesting to know that while JP rejected the Marxian model, yet he did not reject it wholly; he also found many defects with the Western Liberal Democratic model and he rejected it completely in theory at least, but quite paradoxically he made a compromise by accepting it somewhat in practice. Eventually, JP preferred the Gandhian model since it was an indigenous model having considerable relevance to the conditions in India. JP was to realise later that acceptance of the Gandhian model at the theoretical level with certain modifications was one thing and to put it into practice was yet another thing. JP lacked experience and practice in the full implementation of the Gandhian model which explained why his idea of a Communitarian Polity remained merely an utopian concept incapable of being put into practice.

From the foregoing analysis we deduce that the three models competed with each other to find acceptance and implementation in JP's theory and practice in respect of the Communitarian Polity. We also find the spectacle of JP consciously accepting one model at a particular time and unconsciously rejecting other models whenever they did not suit his purpose. The kind of a shifting of

position through conscious and unconscious acceptance and rejection of different models was characteristic of JP's thought during the entire course of his public life. Such a fact may open JP to a charge that he lacked consistency and intellectual conviction in terms of his idea about the Communitarian Polity or other political concepts. A sympathetic view of JP would only imply that in his thought process formal consistency in thought and action was less important than a formulation which was realistic and pragmatic in substance and relevance. It may be argued that JP actually moved from a lower plane of reality or truth to a higher plane of reality or truth. JP was confronted with the issues of power, moral or otherwise, authority arising out of one's own personality or derived from others and force or non-violence in his construction of the Communitarian Polity. Hence, from a theoretical consideration it must be stated emphatically that his concept of the Communitarian Polity was the result of the impact and influence of two western models and one indigenous model, namely Marxist models, Liberal Democratic model and the Gandhian model.

Confusion About Human Nature

JP envisaged a social and political theory in his Communitarian Polity. But surprisingly his theory did not appear to be based on any clear cut conception of human nature. Nevertheless, it would be possible to construct JP's idea of human nature from an analysis of his idea of man and his personality. He regarded human beings as being made up of matter and spirit. Coming under the influence of Gandhian ideas, JP emphasised the spiritual component of man's personality and to this can be traced his support to liberal, democratic institutions. On the other hand, the Marxists emphasised the material aspect of man which gave rise to an authoritarian state. JP was firmly convinced that the spiritual side always had an upper hand over material aspects of development of human civilization. This only meant that spiritulism within a democratic society stood at the apex of JP's theory of Communitarian Polity.

Over-Reliance on State Power

JP's man was a thinking, acting and rational man. He did not pose a dichotomy between man's inward development and man's

external activities. He argurd that an ideal state must strive for the development of the inward personality of man so that he could develop an integrated personality. He felt that the inward morality of man could divert or deviate from the outward manifestation of morality of man. JP set too difficult a task before his Communitarian Polity when he expected it to cater to the inward development of man. It is our contention that too much reliance on state power for enrichment of human personality eventually manifested into the dominance and subjugation of the individual by the state. Moreover, the development of individual personality depended more on individual will and capacity to act rationally rather than on an agency like the Communitarian Polity. The State can only supplement individual efforts rather than act as a substitute for individual efforts towards development.

JP also believed that there was a positive relationship between man and his environment. He assigned primacy to man and his efforts over the ehvironment in which he had to operate. To put the argument in another way, it may be stated that JP assumed that the environment could be completely manipulated to serve the cause of human welfare. We take the position that JP was right to a certain extent when he claimed the predominance of man over the environment. However, in our view, man was not able to fully conquer the environment in the real sense in spite of an advanced civilization. While we do not deny the relevance of JP's argument on this issue, it is our contention that some aspects of the environment would always be beyond the keen of human manipulation. Given this limitation, JP's conception of an ideal state can remain only an ideal for a long time to come.

JP had immense faith in the goodness of human beings which constituted the foundation of the political structure envisaged by him. This led him to prefer participatory democracy as against liberal democracy. In the former the sovereign power vested with the people in theory and practice while in the latter the people were sovereign in theory and power was exercised by their representatives on their behalf. It was, therefore, not surprising that JP rejected the idea of political parties because they distorted the whole political system. JP was an optimist whose theory of partyless participatory democracy was derived from his fervent belief in human capability for self-governance.

equated a functional society with a communitarian society for all practical purposes.

In the Communitarian Polity, the individual as a part of the community would become the basic unit of the society. He would be the primary motivating force of the communitarian society. In other words, JP assumed that human institutions and organisations had their rationale to the extent that they served human interests. JP visualised a co-operative society in his communitarian set up for the 'balanced development of human life'. Did such a process mean that individual interests would be subordinated to community intersts or through a process of adjustment readjustment conflicts would be resolved in a satisfactory manner ? JP was trying to put forth the viewpoint that 'individual interest' and 'community consciousness' were not antithetical to each other. When he made this kind of assumption. JP was confornted with the development of a mechanism to resolve the apparently irreconcilable interest through his theory of comprehensive decentralisation.

Limits of Persuasion in Conflict Resolution

JP placed great emphasis in the building up of the spirit of community through persuasion and conversion. These were psychological variables depending upon moral compulsion and not on coercion through legal action. Given the complex nature of human beings and variations of temperament in different people it would be too much to expect to resolve conflicts in the community through persuasion and conviction rather than through the deterrence of law. In an age where the philosophy of might was right the strong have the tendency to dominate and exploit the weak in which persuasion and conversion would have only a marginal role in the development of community spirit. In a material civilization where there was a competitive quest for greater satisfaction of material comforts class conflict rather than community spirit would become the order of the day.

JP strongly emphasised the voluntary action of man which implied that man was the source from which the community would emerge. He wanted to build a new type of human being through a non-political movement. In such a process of creation of community consciousness the state had no role whatsoever, Hence, he was of the opinion that "the state will be irrelevent for the purpose of a movement, namely, the remaking of man".[16] The participatory

community would be integrated within a holistic structure that would help in the development of a good community.

Theory Practice Gap

JP's decentralised political structure was such that power moved from the bottom to the top and not from the apex to the bottom. JP did not accept the prevailing structure of power which he characterised as an 'inverted pyramid' that stood on its head;[17] in its place he accepted a real paramid model which was 'narrowed at the top and broad at the bottom'. JP help the view that at each stage or level of the pyramid or the concentric circle the relevant unit would have full power to perform the functions allotted to it. It this manner JP visualised that every level or stage in the political structure from the Primary Community to the National Community would operate autonomously and harmoniously in the interest of the people in the community. It must be pointed out that JP probably believed in voluntary co-orperation between the various stages or levels of community in the political structure. It is our view that such a kind of automatic co-operation between various levels of the community would not be possible in reality. Moreover, JP ignored the fact that there could be some kind of overlap of functions between the primary communities in the political structure. Such a scheme would require some kind of legislation to demarcate powers and functions of the communities in the pyramidal political structure. It would, therefore, not be wrong to say that JP revealed a serious theory-practice gap in his conception of the communitarian political structure.

Impractical Rejection to Industrialization

JP castigated the industrial societies of the west since in his view they led to robotism and atomisation of individuals. The burden of his argument was that it also led to depersonalisation of individuals who become mere ciphers incapable of any creative thought or action. We take issue with this position of JP on the ground that his panacea that we should go back to village communities in a communitarian set up would be like going back to industrial primitivism. The modern age has witnessed an industrial revolution leading to the development of an advanced material civilization which has revoluntionised the lives of men and women

in dtfferent part of the world. In view of these momentous developments JP's rejection of an industrialised civilization ın favour of an agro-industrial-urbo rural polity can only trun out to be a cry in the wilderness.

Inadequacies of the Committee System

JP reposed immense faith in the power and efficacy of the committee in the political structure of hıs pyramid model. In fact, he expected them to play the role of a modern state. It is our submission that the requirements of the modern man are very complex and it requires an advanced technology to cater to his needs. The committee neither possess the expertise nor the powers to guide and control the large army of civil servents by motivating them to perform meaningful roles in developmental administration. One got the feeling that JP in his eagerness to decentralise power by handing it over to the committees, seemed to have ignored the need to work out the nature, functions and other details of the operation of the committee system. In our view, the committees could not offer a genuine substitute to state power in the world.

Plea for Communal Ownership

JP while considering the economic structure of his Communitarian Polity argued in favour of communal ownership of property. It must be stated emphatically that it represented the lıngering impact of Marx on JP's ideas. Morever, JP failed to realise the acquisitive nature of human beings which made them own and maintain property in the form of material possessions. In this respect JP was merely arguing from the ideological perspective of Marxian Socialism rather than from what was necessary and practical in the given circumstances. India was predominantly an agricultural country with a traditional social set up and historıcally the people had strong sentimental attachment to land. Therefore, it was very surprising to note that JP was prescribing communal ownership of land or property in India, when the mood and sentiment of the people was against it.[18]

Impossibility of Elimination of Corruption

JP was optimistic that corruption would be wiped out under the Communitarian set up. He placed his trust in the capacity of

the people to eschew the evil of corruption because the Communitarian Polity would provide material and spiritual satisfaction to all the individuals in the community. JP was confronted with the question of corruption among the members of the committees who were expected to play a key role in the operation of the Communitarian Polity. The people through internal vigilance were expected to prevent any corruption among the committee members, In our view, JP was not pragmatic enough to realise that corruption was an universal phenomenon which had to do something with the excessive greed and acquistive nature of human beings. One should only expect at best that the evil of corruption could be minimised rather than completely eliminated in the Communitarian set up.

Misperceptions about the Role of the State

JP assumed that in a Communitarian Polity there was no need for the state and that it would wither away. Probably JP worked out this formulation because of the influence of Marx on his thinking. Neither Marx has been borne out by the events in the world since his prophecy nor would JP's belief that the state would wither away is likely to become a reality in the foreseeable future. On the contrary, the modern welfare state has spread its tentacles in almost every sphere of human endeavour. Instead of the state withering away it has become omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient.

CONCLUSION

In the final analysis JP was not only interested in the reconstruction and recordering of the Indian polity but he was trying to develop an alternative model of democracy through his Communitarian Democratic Polity. He also provided an elaborate critique of the extant parliamentary democracy but, it also suffered from major defects. It is our belief that JP's Communitarian Polity was an ideal or utopian concept which could be established only when ideal conditions prevailed in the society. In the face of human capacity for greed and evil it would be very simplistic to assume, as JP did, that ideal conditions could be created in the Indian society. At best, JP's efforts may be regarded as an attempt to build an ideal system through responsible individual social and

political action in the participatory process.

It may be argued that in JP's concept of Communitarian Polity the impact of Gandhian ideas can be felt in its formulation. For instance, Gandhi did not regard man as an isolated individual but he considered him to be a social being. This idea of Gandhi found its acceptance in JP's Communitarian set up where community consciousness was the result of a community of interests and common brotherhood. The only difference between JP and Gandhi was that the former took the community as the unit of social-political and economic action and development while the latter assumed the self-contained village as a basic unit of action and development.

Notes and References

1. See Jayaprakash Narayan, *The Challenge to Democracy*, *JP Papers*, 1966, (NMML), New Delhi.
2. See S.K. Dey, *Power to the People*, (New Delhi, Orient Longman Ltd., 1969).
3. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy*, Bimla Prasad, (ed.,), p. 209. Also see, Jayaprakash Narayan, [*Swaraj For The People*, 1961, III Instalment, Speeches/writings by JP in *JP. Papers*, New Delhi.
4. See A.S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, (Delhi, 1972).
5. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 212-13.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 214-18.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 219.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 222.
12. *Ibid.*, pp 224-25.
13. *Ibid* , p. 225.
14. See Jayaprakash Narayan, *Communitarian Society and Panchayat Raj.*, Brahmanand, (ed ,), (Varanasi, Navachetna Prakashan, 1970).
15. The idea of decentralisation of power was derived by JP from Gandhi, See *Gandhi and the Politics of Non-Violence and Decedtralisation*, 1969, IIIrd Instalment, Subject File, *JP Papers*, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. For a discussion of Gandhi's, concept of decentralisation, see, V.T. Patil and I.A Lokapur, "Gandhi's concept of Decentralisation : An Analysis", *Gandhi Marg*, Oct. 1981.
16. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Total Revolution* : *Search for An Ideology*, Vol. I, Brahmanand (ed.), pp. 170-71.

17. Jayaprakash Narayan, *Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy*, Bimla Prasad (ed.), pp. 2-4.
18. In this connection see the views of W.H Morris Jones who has written as follows : "'. . . even if there had been at some time a 'Communitarian' civilisation in India it is an altogether separate question whether some kind of return to it is '*in the natural course of social evolution*' (Italics added). The use of that phrase is fairly described as evidence of 'historicist' thinking and that when it is coupled with the notion of scientific validity one is justified in saying ". . . . that JP is still holding Marx's hand". W.H. Morris Jones, "Rejoinder to Willion Carpenter's defence of Jayaprakash", *The Ecocomic Weekly*, 4 Feb., p. 125.

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A CRITIQUE OF J.P.'S POLITY

ADI H. DOCTOR*

Even since J.P. published for private circulation his "Plea for the construction of the Indian Polity," he has become the centre of much criticism and comment. Even foreign critics have not spared him. Some like Morris-Jones have dubbed him as Visionary and Utopian; while others have denounced him as the enemy of Democracy, who, while pretending the broaden and deepen it, has really been working to undermine it.[1]

Now while there might be some justification in the criticism, the second appears less warranted. J P. is from early youth an admirer of freedom. His active participation in the struggle is a testimony in this. But with the passage of time as youthful buoyancy gave way to there mature thinking, freedom came to transcend the mere liberation from foreign yoke and to embrace "the freedom of man everywhere and from every sort of trammel, above all, it meant freedom of the human personality, freedom of the mind, freedom of the spirit." It was this concept of freedom, which J.P. admits, became with him "a passion of life" and which he would not see compromised "for bread, for power, for security, for prosperty, for the glory of the state or for anything else."[2]

During the 1920's J.P. fell prey to the attractive Marxist slogans of the equality and brotherhood. At this time he knew little of Gandhiji; in fact the close association with M.N. Roy had

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led him to believe that Gandhiji was against Social Revolution and an indirect upholder of the present system of exploitation and inequality. But Marxism failed to deliver the words and J P. soon abandoned it for a more moderate type of Socialism. Today he has broken off from the Socialist camp to join the ranks of the Sarvodayaites. But his object ever remained freedom. It may be that J.P.'s proposals, for realising freedom may defeat their own propose but that is quite a different thing from questioning his bonafides.[3]

Having been a Marxist in his early youth, J.P. was naturally influenced by the Marxist ideal of the stateless society. Later, even though he abandoned Marxism, his faith in this ultimate ideal continued. "I continued to feel strongly that human freedom could be fully and wholly realised only in a stateless society."[4] J P., is not certain whether the state will ever wither away completely but admits that "it is one of the noblest goals of social endeovour to ensure that are powers and functions and spheres of the state are reduced as for as possible." Thus, he seems to uphold Anarchism as the ultimate ideal, perhaps unrealizable as Gandhiji believed, and is therefore willlng in practice to stay content with the Individualist. Theory which proclaims that government to be best which governs least.

J.P.'s writings exhibit a deep distrust of the state. The state stands for power. It comprises of a handful of people who have become the arbiters of the fate of all. In the name of welfare it has enslaved man. Governments and profiteers combined to create this Frankenstein of modern society. "With the growth of science and technology and a complex economic system, government is becoming more and more the business of smaller and smaller number of people. With the consequent growing concentration of economic power and political power in the hands of fewer people —whether they are private citizens of officers of the state—democracy would be just a matter of form than of substance"[5]

A one-time Socialist, J.P., today, condemns Socialists as even worse than the Bourgeois, for, while the latter were content with the monopoly of political power, the former threaten to add to that the monopoly of economic power. And neither a written constitution nor the theory of Checks and Balances, which implies the existence of trade unions and Consumers' Associations and Co-operatives of all kinds, can help save the situation. As long as the powerful economic and political bureaucracy remains in

occupation of vantage positions, the freedoms and rights of the people as well as their daily subsistence would be entırely at its mercy. In the words of J.P. "after all is said and done, the Democratic Socialist State remains a Leviathan that will sit heavily on the freedoms of the people". If therefore, the people are to experience real freedom, the power, which is today concentrated in the hands of a few, must be diffused. The aim of Sarvodayan Politics is to see that "all centres of power are abolished. The more this new politics grows, the more the old politics shrinks. A real withering away of the state."[6]

J.P.'s distruct is not confined to the government alone but also extends to parties and the system of elections. He is a strong critique of the present democratic set up in which parties rule supreme and are brought to power by direct elections. Such a democratic set up he brands as "inorganic", for, it treats every individual citizen as an atom by itself whereas by nature man is social and co-operative, not atomistic. It "conceives of society as an inorganic mass of separate grains of individuals. The conception is that of an atomised society. The brick with which the present edifice of the democratic polity is constructed is the individual voter and the whole process of democracy rests on the arithmetic of votes. The individual voter casts his vote as an atom of society, not as a living cell in an organic relationship with other living cells. It is not living together that is expressed and represented in the institutions and processes of democracy but an abstract individual.'[7]

The present party system, like the elections, hinders the growth of an organic or partıcipating democracy. The parties, instead of helping the people to rule, have arrogated all power to themselves. They have erected all sorts of barriers between the people and the government. With the help of large funds and subtle propaganda they have successfully imposed the party will on the people. Instead of the peoples' will, the party will has come to prevail. The people are not even allowed to think. Instead they are taught to look for every petty thing to New Delhi. Their initiative and strength, without which there can be no self-government, are thus being undermined and they are reduced to the status of sheep whose only function of sovereignty is to choose periodically the shepherds who would look after their welfare

If therefore, the people are to be really made to feel the pulse

of freedom, the remedy lies in Organic or Participating Democracy. Inorganic democracy, based on individual votes and powerful parties, can at most—and this the maximum praise J.P. is willing to bestow on the present democratic structures, even in the west,—mean government by consent, it can never mean participation in government.

A participating organic Democracy in which the people as a group, act and feel as one individual, is possible only in the context of decentralisation. *Prima facie* it would be impossible for millions of voters to participate in a government run only from New Delhi and a few state capitals. Herein lies the entire rationale behind J.P.'s plea for decentralisation. The latter term does not imply Local Self-Government. In local self-government all the major and vital decisions are taken at the centre, and local organs have subsidiary and delegated powers, that is, power procleates down, whereas what participating Democracy demands is power moving upwards. The smaller units are to be autonomous in their respective fields. The higher units will enjoy only such powers and functions as will be voluntarily handed over by lower ones.

The family is the first and the simplest of social units. When a number of families come together and pool their resources in order to lead a more fullsome life, there emerges the Local or the Village Community. When these in turn come togethet to cooperate and tackle common problems, we get the Regional Community, which J.P. considers the "key" or "optimum" community. As to the reiationship between the Local and the Regional Communities, the former will do all that is possible within its internal resources; whereas the latter will be entrusted with only such functions as prove beyond the resources and competence of the Local units, such as health services and village indusiries. Thus, the Regional Community comes into existence by an organic process of growth and the same holds true for the still higher tiers—the District, the Provincial, and the National Communities. And as one proceeds from the lower to the higher tiers, the functions and powers *parri passu* decrease, the higher level enjoying only such powers as are delegated to it.

In Organic Democracy there will be no parties nor electoral contests. At the village level the residents will nominate by some sort of universal consensus, the best servants of society. These in turn will again, by near unanimity, appoint persons to the

higher body and so on all the way to the top. In practice the procedure becomes akin to indirect elections with the one basic difference that while elections proceed on the majority principle J P. prefers some sort of universal consensus.

It would be apt here to compare J P.'s Organic Democrary with the ideal society visualised by the Federal Anarchists. To the Anarchists, too, real politics means local politics. Hence they advocate a completely decentralised society built up of small autonomous communes. To achieve co-ordination between the various communes, the more practical among the Anarchists, argue for an hierarchical arrangement. But, the more ardent ones, like Bakunin, refused to recognise any authority over the commune, even in a federal form. Bakunin had no objection to a voluntary federation of the communes for common purposes; what he was against was any sort of super-imposition.

Although J.P. permits of communities above the Regional Community or the Key Community, he rules out the possibility of any super-imposition by declaring that higher tiers of the hierarchy are the result of an organic growth having been created by the lower units and entrusted with certain powers and function by them. Since power will move from down upward, any attempt on the part of the higher authority to superimpose its will would result in its own defeat and to this extent J.P.'s polity does smack of Anarchism.[8]

Bearing in mind the fact that modern governments may have gone a step too far in the direction of centralism and that modern parties may have spread their tentacles far and wide almost chocking individual initiative, J.P.'s Thesis may appear to the unwary mind an oasis in the desert But, on approaching closer the oasis turns out to be a mirage.

The very first difficulty that the New polity will confront pertains to Human Material. Like most Anarchists, J.P. admits that to do without the state or with a state that governs least requires on the part of every individual a high moral character, "an ability to live in amity, justice and co-operation with his fellowmen without outward restraints of any kind," and further adds that these qualities might not be forthcoming immediately but they constitute "the test of evolution".[9] In his Thesis he enumerates nine spiritual and moral qualities without which freedom would be meaningless. These are: concern for truth;

aversion to violence; love of liberty and courage to resist oppression and tyranny; the spirit of co-operation; preparedness to adjust self-interest to the larger intersts; respect for others' opinions and tolerance; readiness to take responsibility; belief in the fundamental equality of man; and faith in the educability of human nature

There is no denying that the human material is malleable. But history has time and again shown that there is a limit beyond which we cannot go. Plato, for instance, had high hopes of man. His great work, "The Republic", outlines picture of the Ideal society. And when opportunity came, Plato unsuccessfully tried to mould the young tyrant, Dion, into a philosopher King. After Plato many others also did the same. But all to no avail. Man continued to be what he was. If this is then the testimony of history, little wonder that some people feel prone to stigmatise J.P. as an Utopian.

The Utopian character of J.P.'s Polity strikes home better when it is remembered that he is pleading for a reconstruction of the *Indian Polity*. It is admitted at all hands that the Indian village is far from being a "happy family". Mutual distrust, suspicions, caste and class conflicts—this is the story that every Indian village has to tell. Mutual jealousies and bickerings, together with the fact that a community spirit has yet to develop, will make a farce of "participation in government." One of two things will happen. The internal conflicts will make it impossible for the village community to appoint its "panchas" by a near unanimous vote; while the insistence on universal consensus might result in the nullification of all progressive legislation, Else the unanimity principle may pave the way for a tyranny worse than ever experienced before. Every village has its regular bullies and its handful of top-men, the Patil, the money-leader, the priest, who may, in order to oblain universal support, increase their stranglehold and tyranny over the poor peasantry.

J.P. seems to be aware of this, for he emphatically observes that elections to village panchayats should be held without any electoral contests. "To introduce electroal contests in the village is to throw a monkey-wrench into the works," and to make it (village) a centre of faction fights and an "Instrument of further disrupition".[10] It is indeed strange that knowing the disease J.P. should still insist on an odd cure. If there is no Collective Will

in the village today, how can the village be expected to do away with elections and appoint its Panchas by Universal Consensus ? J.P. lands himself into the rather unhappy position of denying something and then yet proceeding on the basis that it exists.

Even otherwise a theoretical case can be made out against vesting too much power with small units. As Zimmerin has pointed out, the smaller the unit the greater the stranglehold on the individual. We all know how heavily the family can press down on the individual. And the family is undoubtedly the most amiable of human institutions. And equally admittedly the Indian village is a far cry from the happy family that some idealists and visionaries think it to be. Thus, although J.P. may have set out to reconstruct the Indian Polity with the ardent and genuine desire to make more real the content of freedom, in practice his Polity is more likely to defeat its own aim than achieve it.

Besides, J.P. bases his entire plea on the assumption that participating in government means being free. Hence the plea for replacing the present Inorganic Democracy by the participating or Organic Democracy.[11] But all men do not necessarily experience the sensation of being free only by participating in ruling themselves. Those wedded to a lethargic life or a purely non-political life, like the artist devoted to his art or the scholar to his studies, may in fact chafe under a participating democracy and their freedom instead of being increased would be reduced.

Nor finally must we overlook the difficulties that will be caused by the non-party character of the system. In the absence of objective principles, personalities and all sorts of subjective considerations will gain the upper hand. And, secondly, even granting that in a small village of a thousand to two thousand souls it may be possible for the community to find its best servents for appointment to the village panchayat. How can the same be said of appointments by the numerous village communities to the District Panchayat and of the numerous District Panchayats to the Provincial Panchayat, all the way to the top ? Some sort of party labels will become necessary to help sift between prospective candidates.

Economically J.P.'s Polity will be characterised by simplicity and plain living. "Democracy cannot exist with the insatiable hunger for more and more material goods—I believe that for man

really to enjoy liberty and freedom and to practise in self-government it is necessary to voluntarily limit his wants."[12] But what relation can there be between Democracy and voluntary limitation of wants ? According to J.P., wants being insatiable the greed for more and still more will lead to "mutual conflict, coercion, spoilation and war; and also to a system of production that will be so complex as to bind democracy hand and foot and deliver it to a bureaucratic oligarchy." Hence the materialist philosophy must be first discarded, otherwise Organic Democracy which is concerned with the all-round and balanced development of each individual, will not succeed. Democracy is essentially a moral problem, concerned with making men human, but "materialism robs man of the means to be truly human." Hence materialism and Democracy become incompatible.

But where does all this ethical quibbling lead us to ? Is J.P. implying that the Indian masses, grounded for years under the heels of poverty, should voluntarily refuse to raise their standard of living ? In the west, where perhaps materialism has run riot and a consequent 'dehumanisation' has set in, the remedy may be worth trying. But evidently J.P.'s advice is not directed to such western countries. They very title of his Thesis states that it is a Plea for the reconstruction of the Indian Polity.

Even logically, J.P.'s attempt to link up the idea of democracy with the voluntary limitation of wants is unacceptable. According to him we must be content with 'bread-labour' i.e. we must earn enough to maintain overselves, to clamour for more is to exhibit blatant materialism and to sacrifice moral and spiritual values for a superficial increase in luxuries. But such a reasoning implies that material and spiritual progress are two contradictory and incompatible forces—the more of one meaning the less of the other; while really speaking, this need not be so. Man is both body and mind and the two are in a sense inseparable. "A healthy mind in a healthy body" so runs an old Latin saying. Quite conceiveably then, large scale production, industrialisation and an increase in the standard of living by which the luxuries of each bygone decade become the necessaries of the next, instead of diminishing moral and spiritual values, may instead release human energy for more creative activities like art and literature and for the blossoming of service and sacrifice.

J.P.'s ideal Polity will be one in harmony with nature to be

built on "renewable resources". "A civilization built on renewable resources as the products of forestry and agriculture is by the fact alone superior to one built on non-renewable resources, such as coal-oil-metal because the former can last while the latter cannot." [13]

The above warning may no doubt be given with all good intention, but it overlooks certain facts. In the first instance there is no imminent danger of a sudden exhaustion of the so-called non-renewable resources. Secondly, point of total exhaustion expected by some scientists is expected so many hundreds of years hence that long before that fatal day is reached, human ingenuity will surely have found some alternative. As it is, today, plastic shoes are replacing leather shoes and plastic crockery glassware. In all legititimacy we can therefore expect that should the production of coal and steel decline, the human brain will discover some other substitute, some other alloy or combination of alloys, which can do the work of steel. In the light of these facts there is need to stint ourselves of the present use of the so-called non-renewable resources and thus suffer undue privation in the present. Besides, today iron and steel occupy snch a key position in our economy that and attempt to abandon their use would imply a closure of almost all large industries and also a considereable disturbance of trade.

The new Polity will be free from "the present monstrosities" that is "the big cities". Man's balanced development requires a harmonious blend of nature and culture, which cannot be had in cities like London, Moscow or New York, but only in "comparatively smaller communities." And therefore all present cities must be decentralised and attempts made to reorganise them, while no new big cities must be allowed to come up. Since big cities have come up largely because of large scale prduction and the concentration of heavy industries, the root cause must be removed and all production must be on a small scale. In fact J.P. would desire every Regional Community to be capable of meeting most of its agricultural and industrial needs by its own efforts. Such a community will be "agro-industrial", a term which implies an organic blending of agriculture and industry, "An agro-industrial community would, for example, not only process wheat and paddy or fruits and vegetables or sugarcane and cotton, but also manufacture radios, cycle parts, small machines, electrical goods, etc. that

might be needed in the region."

But experimenting with such agro-industrial communities might prove that are expensive. A part from the fact that it might not be practicable in the case of all communities, it will deprive the country of the benefits of a nation-wide division of labour Some regions are better suited for agriculture, while others for industry. If therefore such regions instead of artificially trying to blend agriculture and industry, followed the easire course of specialisation on the basis of 'Comparative Advantage', not only the nation itself but even the regions concerned would stand to gain.

If each and every Regional Community cannot become an economically viable unit—and there is no remote possibility—the amount of functions and powers that will have to be delegated by such units to the higher autorities will increase. In other words, some central planning authority with overriding powers will have to be established to bring forth regional adjustment and see that the economically handicapped communities do not suffer a perpetuation of their poverty.

Even otherwise it is advantageous to have a Central Planning Agency than to diffuse this function among myriad small units, for, the former will be not only in a better position to evalute the needs of the nation as a whole, but also of a particular district. Centralism is inherent in any system of planning which seeks the development and uplift of a large area of a heterogeneous character. If, therefore J.P. desires a better all-round development and the removal of regional inequities he will have to reconcile himself with higher authorities exercising greater and overriding powers, and not *vice versa*. And if the higher authorities—the Provincial Communities and the National Community—are responsible and accountable to those lower in the hierarchy and responsive to their wishes and demands, there is no reason why J.P. should grudge a political structure, in which greater but responsible power is vested in the higher authorities, and this for the ultimate benefit of all.[14]

This is not to deny the need for some economic and political decentralisation. Decentralisation will be necessary not only to relieve the Centre of its work-load, but more importantly because there is considerable truth in the old adage, 'he who wears the shoe knows where it pinches.' But decentralisation must have its limits too. No one need oppose a reasonable decentralisation,

but when decentralisation is made to connote the existence of small autonomous communities, enjoying not delegated powers and functions, but instead possessing the power to delegate upward, then the proposal can be opposed in rational grounds.

Although J.P. may be inspired by the noblest ideals in his forwarding a Plea for the Reconstruction of the Indian Polity, its cardinal weak spot is that it founders on the rock of reality. Like most reformers J.P. is reactionary. His philosophy is a reaction against excessive centralism and against the abuses and defects of the present parliamentary system of government. Let us benefit from his strictures and criticisms, but at the same time let us also guard overselves against going to the other extreme, lest we jump from the frying-pan into the fire.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Morris-Jones' Article "The Unhappy Utopia—J.P. in Wonderland" in *The Economic Weekly*, 4 Feb , 1960. Also his rejoinder to W. Carpenter's defence of J.P., *Ibid.*, 25 June, 1960.
2. *From Socialism to Sarvodaya*, p. 5.
3. To such criticism J.P.'s own reply is : "I really do not know how to deal with criticism that starts with questioning motives and imputing dishonesty. No amount of protestation on my part will change the heart of such critics. This type of criticism has come mainly from circles that have disliked my condemnation of Russian conduct in Hungary or Chinese aggression in Tibet or my advocacy of Indo-Pakistan friendship." *Introduction to "Organic Democracy"*, pp. 1-2.
4. *From Socialism to Savodaya* p. 32.
5. *Organic Democracy*, p. 3.
6. Quoted in Varna's, *Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya*, p. 287.
7. *A Plea for the Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, pp. 35-36.
8. P. 42, *The Plea*, J.P. writes : "Just as in its internal administration the Primary (Village) Community is autonomous so in the spheres in which the Primary Communities have delegated powers to the regional community the latter is autonomous." Now this surely denies the regional community overriding powers, for, the word J.P. uses is "delegated" which by definition means power that can be taken back.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Organic Democracy*, p. 8.
11. "It must be be emphasised that the western concept of democracy as government by consent, or, in other words, as a political system that offers an opportunity to the people to change their government peacefully is not an adequate enough concept, and that we should profit from the experience of the west.

12. *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity*, p. 4.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
14. It is important to note the distinction between the two senses in which the words 'greater powers' can be used, viz., more powers in the quantitative sense, and higher powers, in the qualitative sense as implying the power of delegation (upward, in this case). We have no objection to the smaller units having more quantitative powers. What we object to is their having higher powers, those of delegating and its corollary, overriding powers which in India would make the higher authorities subject to the worst type of parochialism and regionalism.

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"ANTYODAYA" AND RURAL REGENERATION

M.S. SWAMINATHAN AND I.E. SOARES

The greatest challenge before us now is achieving self-replicating economic growth which can provide gainful employment to everyone. The most important self-replicating device in the universe is the DNA molecule, which is the chemical substance of heredity. The DNA molecule is structured in such a way that it provides for specificity, variability and mutability, besides replicability. What can be the equivlent of this device in developmental planning ?

Here in India we were fortunate enough to have had a seminal thinker of the calibre of Mahatma Gandhi who gave us the concept of *Antyodaya*; in his view, *the utility of all development programmes must be measured against one basic yardstick, viz , the real benefits to be derived by the poorest person.* This concept has been firmly reiterated by the Janata Party which has called "for a new type of planning, a new approach to administration, new values and an altogether new ethos." The political will has been stated in clear terms of assigning primacy to agriculture and rural development, and in backing up these aims with the requisite funds. Planners and administrators have also begun working on strategies which would help to achieve these developmental goals.

It was, again, Mahatma Gandhi who identified the major malady of the rural scene as "the divorce between intellcct and labour" which resulted in condemning millions of persons to live

and work in despair and drudgery Prof. P.V. Sukhatme in his Ninth Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial Lecture (New Delhi, January 1977) has given estimates of the incidence of malnutrition in India. According to him, "there are close to a 100 million in the country who are chronically malnourished and poor... the majority of them are labour households with little or no land of their own, depending almost exclusively for their earnings on the casual work they obtain." He goes on to point out that these are the people who, for want of adequate food, are unable to attain their full potential, who are particularly vulnerable to diseases and natural calamities, and live a precarious life for lack of gainful employment and food at prices they can afford. This human tragedy becomes even more painful in the context of recent increases achieved in grain reserves. On the one hand, we are finding it difficult to build up adequate storage capacity for foodgrains, and on the other hand, we cannot banish malnutrition by increasing the purchasing power of the rural poor through productive employment.

Faced by this dilemma, one can see that political will and professional skill must combine effectively to provide an urgent break-through. It is here that professional scientists and technologists have a vital role to play in achieving rural transformation. Their first step is to prepare a sciantific balance sheet of the developmental assets and liabilities of a selected rural area. An analysis of this rural balance sheet will help to identify the developmental opportunities that exist and the bottle-necks that have to be removed. The next step is to convert these developmental opportunities into a portfolio of economically-viable projects, in consultation with bankers and administrators. It is at this stage that the *"Antyodaya"* concept becomes especially relevant. Only those projects which will help to increase the purchasing power of the' rural poor should be taken up by Government and voluntary agencies for immediate implementation. The better-off sections of the rural community must be left to depend upon their own initiatives. It is in establishing this new system of priorities for the benefit of the rural poor that we should attempt a radical departure from previous tradition.

Employment-generation programmes, based on scientific resource utilisation strategies, can be of two major types :

(a) employment generated by Government through developmental projects, and
(b) employment generated through projects based on self-help and group initiative.

In the immediate future, Government can help in providing a minimum wage for rural labour by taking up a massive programme for irrigation, supply of drinking water and communications—sectors with significant employment potential. The national irrigation plan now under development envisages bringing 57 million hectares under major and medium irrigation projects and 50 million hectares under minor irrigation projects. The allocation for irrigation projects in the year 1977-78 alone is expected to exceed Rs. 10,000 million, the highest outlay ever, and create 1.3 million hectares of additional irrigation potential. Investments on this massive scale will call for the preparation of detailed area plans for minor irrigation schemes and the efficient use of water available from the irrigation system. Development of this basic infrastructure will increase the opportunities for self-employment through multiple cropping and mixed farming.

Government projects for the development of communications and supply of drinking water in the rural areas will also help in increasing the purchasing power of the rural poor and in developing the rural infrastructure.

In the long-term, however, the real solution lies in generating employment through projects based on self-help and group initiative. It is these projects which have a special relevance to countries in the Asian region with their own distinctive patterns of social organisation and massive man-and woman-power resources. Perhaps, at this stage, one may think of setting down certain basic guide-lines for developing employment generation programmes :

(a) the conversion of human energy into a specific output should be enhanced by the application of appropriate technology; human drudgery should not be perpetuated and the best use should be made of the delicate finger-skills so wide-spread in the Asian region;
(b) the role of women in the rural labour force should be given specific recognition; agricultural extention

programmes should be so designed as to reach out to them and wherever possible, agro-industries should be organised to provide for both part-time employment and for home-based functioning;

(c) children should be relieved of full-time income-earning responsibilities so that they can attend school;

(d) wherever possible, landless labour should be helped to become owners of production units *Increasingly in the entire Asian region, land will become the most priceless possession.* It will be almost impossible to ensure that everyone owns a viable plot of land. And so, animal husbandry, fisheries and rural industries will have to be developed as alternative production units to be owned by landless labour. It is here that basic public policy issues are involved. For example, India has a coastline of about 6,000 km. which at present supports only 3.5 million fishing families. When scientific sea farming practices are developed through a blend of culture and capture fisheries, the potential employment will be increased considerably. *It will be necessary to decide immediately that landless labour should get the first priority in allocating sea space for mariculture.* New settlements combining mariculture with the plantation of casuarina, cashewnut and coconut can provide the basis for prosperous coastal communities;

(e) in order to hasten the process of marrying intellect with labour, all educational, scientific and technological institutions should be assigned well-defined responsibilities for undertaking resources analysis for selected areas, and preparing portfolios of viable projects in consultation with the people of the area; and

(f) state governments, political parties, voluntary agencies and local self-governing institutions should accept the responsibility for preparing the local community to implement these plans.

A Core Group on Integrated Rural Development, working in the I.C.A.R., has developed the following guidelines for organising a scientific up-grading of the rural economy :

(a) the Action Plans must provide gainful employment and increase the purchasing power of the rural poor, in particular, landless labour, marginal farmers, artisans, women and children;
(b) employment generation programmes must spring from scientific resource utilisation strategies; and
(c) the programmes should be simple in operation and economically viable so that they are quickly capable of achieving self-reliance and self-replication.

It has been emphasised that the programmes should have no rigid structure; instead, each action plan should be tailored to suit local needs, resources and priorities based upon participation of the local community.

The planning phase was accordingly divided into 3 steps :

(1) compilation of an integrated resources inventory that will identify natural resources, infra-structure and participants drawn from the rural poor;
(2) undertaking a Malady-Remedy Analysis and preparing draft Action Plans indicating major break-through points; and
(3) vetting the draft Action Plans with the help of the local community.

Examples of the kinds of developmental opportunities revealed by the analysis of resources inventories in the Chandrapur and Cannanore districts.

At this point it would be helpful to present some concrete illusstrations. Thus, in the rice-growing delta of the Cauvery River in Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu, it appears possible to provide additional employment and income for families of landless labour and marginal farmers through the introduction of a relevant package of post-harvest technology. This package involves fortification of rice straw with urea and molasses for use as cattle and goat feed; extraction of rice bran oil and use of deoiled bran and rice husk For this purpose, suitable animal husbandry programmes have to be organised side by side with a Fodder Bank and a Co-operative Service Society. This approach can be adopted

in every major cereal-based farming system.

In a totally different milieu, families of fishermen engaged in capture fisheries at Kovalam Village, Tamil Nadu, will be taught open-sea culture of mussels on simple rafts and poles made from locally-available raw materials. The seed mussels and technical supervision will be provided by the local laboratory of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute. This approach can again be replicated all along the coast.

There is a detailed list of small-scale industries, khadi and village industries, handicrafts, sericulture, etc. that also possess considerable potential for self-employment. It is important that these activities should be helped to quickly achieve self-reliance and to restrict the element of subsidy. However, their real success will depend upon the organisation of the following vital ingredients :

(a) steady supply of raw materials of the right quality and at economic prices;
(b) provision of designs that can be adapted to keep pace with changes in consumer demand;
(c) maintenance of strict quality control on the end product; and
(d) organisation of producers' marketing societies that leave them with the maximum share of the profit.

A special effort has been made to get research scientists to suggest how best the technology developed in their laboratories can be used to help develop opertional projects, economically-viable and capable of replication. Some of the ideas thrown up by the scientists include cultivation of geranium flowers and pyrethrum flowers; up-grading of local non-descript goats; systematic programme of coconut replanting combined with schemes for inter-cropping, mixed cropping and mixed farming; schemes for growing fishes in fresh water reservoirs and paddy fields and a scheme for developing an industrial estate based on marine fisheries. (This last scheme is really intended to help the fishermen and their families to catch more fish, to improve their processing methods and to develop new by-products). Allthrough the effort has been to get scientists and technologists interested in the late Professor Schumacher's idea that "small is beautiful". *It is only*

by insisting on the design and implementation of small replicable projects that the integrated rural development programme can develop the dimensions of a mass movement.

A protfolio of well-defined and carefully costed projects can be drawn up for each target area. These projects can then be entrusted for implementation to the most appropriate non-official or official agency in the area. Such a "Task Adoption" approach will enable each of these agencies to monitor its own contribution in qualitative and quantitative terms according to a well-defined milestone chart At present, there is a trend towards adopting the village as a whole which confronts the implementing agency with a universe of problems and leads in the end to dissatisfaction and despair. Instead, each agency will adopt only that task for which it possesses the necessary expertise, i.e. medical educational agricultutal, veterinary, industrial, etc.

The success of the programme will depend primarily upon the calibre of the staff deployed for its implementation. Apart a small core of staff permanently posted in the project area, the rest will consist of specialists deputed to handle specific short-term assignments. *However, it is felt that the field of rural development holds out great promise far the organisation of a Rural Service Corps manned by young professionals who have volunteered to serve in the rural areas for a minimum period of 2-3 years.* Experience has shown that there are many young persons with a sense of idealism and dynamism who would be willing to give some years of their life to rural development before entering upon their regular careers. Young doctors, engineers, agricultural scientists, veterinarians, social and home scientists and others, who could function as professional interns, working under supervision in completing clearly-defined assignments. This period of rural service will help them in acquiring greater professional maturity and experience and greater insight and sympathy in understanding the realities of life in rural communities. These volunteers will not receive a regular salary during the contract period; instead, they can be paid a consolidated fellowship linked with their individual level of professional training.

Apart from a careful scheme of recruitment and training, these volunteers should be deployed in selected villages in carefully chosen groups of 3-4 persons in order to provide a blend of expertise and to help each other in the unfamiliar rural environment.

These volunteers have a specific contribution to make in spreading the latest scientific and technological developments in the fields of agricultural, agro-industries, nutrition, supply of drinking water and primary health care. They can help in training a cadre of soil health-care workers drawn from local educated youth. Simple kits can be designed for taking regular soil samples and a link can be established with specialist staff working outside the project area in well-equipped laboratories. Similarly, volunteers can help in building up a cadre of animal and plant health-care workers; introducing improved practices for conserving and using water resources; new techniques of fish culture; energy supply; recycling of waste products, etc. Volunteers can also help in building up local farmers' organisations so that group initiative can be used in handling common management tasks, e.g., crop planning, vertical choice, soil, water and pest management. grain drying, storage and marketing. Young married couples would be ideal for serving as members of the Rural Service Corps.

In conclusion, the aim of the I R.D. programme should be to promote the generation of opportunities for gainful employment through the optimum use of the locally available resource. The programme will have to be developed with the help of the participant groups and its success or failure should be measured by human rather than strictly economic yardsticks. *Antyodaya*, or benefit to the poorest sections of the community, should be the sole criterion for determination of priorities. Further, the methodology of implementation should provide opportunities for a confluence of efforts with opportunities for everyone interested in rural development making a contribution through the adoption of well-defined tasks.

The guiding principles of a scientific rural regeneration movement may be summed up as follows :

1. Improvement in the quality of life and purchasing power of the most under-privileged sections of the rural poor will be the sole criterion in the determination of priorities in programme formulation and implementation;
2. Contribution to productivity, rather than receipt of a dole, will be the mechanism for improvement in purchasing power;
3. The creation of unique show-pieces involving massive

external inputs of money, manpower and technology will be avoided; instead, programmes which will, catalyse self-propelling and self-replieating growth, leading to the conversion of a small programme into a mass movement will be developed with the help of the people concerned;

4. The techniques of science introduced will be based on low-cost, relevant and small-scale technology using sound principles of ecology and economics;
5. The reversal of the drain of brain and resources from the village to the town will have to be brought about by providing organised opportunities for educated youth and young professionals, to participate in the process of development. Through the deployment of a Rural Service Corps of young professionals, a cadre of trained local youth can be built up for taking the tools of science to the rural areas;
6. The immediate task of all universities, scientific and technological institutions should be the compilation of integrated resource inventories bringing together data on the developmental assets and liabilities of each area. This will enable the preparation of a portfolio of projects which can help to convert the endowments of each area into wealth meaningful to the rural poor;
7. The developmental opportunities revealed by the resource inventory should be further classified into : (a) those which lend themseleves for Government action, such as irrigation, supply of drinking water, communications, etc., and (b) those which can lead to self-employment. Priority should be accorded in the choice of project to those which can help persons below the poverty line;
8. The pattern of administration of the project should be such that it will provide opportunities for every agency—official and non-official—to make a contribution.

Shri Jayapakash Narayan has dedicated himself to the task of bringing politics within the confines of *dharma* and development within the framework of *antyodaya*. The fittest tribute we can pay to him is to ensure strict adherence to these basic principles.

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MY IMAGE OF COMPLETE REVOLUTION

B.L. Atreya

Immediately after the emancipation of India from the Congress rule of thirty years, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, the leader of the Bloodless Revolution in India, announced on the Radio that India needed a Complete Revolution. What would be the shape of that Revolution, he did not, however, tell the listeners. I believe every thinking Indian should devote his time and attention to this problem, and participate in bringing about a Complete Revolution, which is badly needed in this country. Indian life has become very old and infirm. It needs rejuvenation, revival and renewal. I, as a thinker, have felt inspired by the Lokanayak's call for Complete Revolution in our country. Hence this small article.

All great movements in the life of a nation have their roots in thought. A change in the thought and outlook of India is, therefore, very much needed before our social, cultural, and political life can be changed. The general outlook of India, which has persisted from times immemorial, and which is responsible for our national weaknesses, should, therefore, be changed first.

From the very early times of the Upanishads we Indians have been thinking that the life on earth, which is the only life we know and have to live, is not our real life. The aims of life for us have been other-worldly and *post mortem*, for the realization of which every thing earthly and this-worldly has to be given up and forsaken. All the good things are in an extraterrestial Heaven, which we can enjoy only after the death of the earthly body. We have

never tried to make a heaven of this earth and never tried to make this worldly life heavenly, which it could be made. We have aspired for *Moksha* or liberation from all the evils, after the death of the body, and have not tried to live a happy and liberated life here and now, which could be possible with little effort. We have always accepted all the happenings in our life, and taken them as inevitable fate or as un-avoidable consequedces of our *karma* of previous life or lives, and did not fight against them to improve our lot. We have always submitted to sickness, old age and death, and have rarely tried to conquer them, except through prayers to the unknown powers of the Universe. We have been slaves to gods who were considered as the determiners of our destiny. Such has been the general outlook of Indians throughout the long past. It has had its pernicious effect on all aspects of life. It has to be completely changed into a new outlook based on the newest findings of science and philosophy. We have to retain the best that is in our old and ancient culture, and combine it with the best of the Western scientific culture. Modern science has made valuable studies of the nature of things and of life and death. We must now get enlightenment from these studies, and make our life worth living. We should try to conquer all the evils of life, sickness, old age, and death. We should try to make our life peaceful and happy, here and now, and should try to make this earth itself into a heaven, by removing all the causes of physical and mental and spiritual suffering. Instead of being pessimistic we should be fully optimistic. We should enjoy all the legitimate and unharmful pleasures of life and should shun none of them. Such is the Revolution I wish to have in our cultural or thought life, which will have its effect on all the aspects of our life.

Our ethical life needs a great revolution. We have been neglecting the natural and divine principles of ethical life. Hence our social life is miserable. Ethical principles, such as Truth, Ahimsa, Fellowship, Friendliness, Honesty, Goodwill, Sincerity, Forgiveness, Non-anger and Social Service, should be revived and practised by every man, woman and child. It is only on the basis of the practice of these and similar other moral principles that our social life can be stable and happy. We Indians are much less moral than the people of other civilised countries, such as England, Japan, America and Europe. Unless our moral standard rises higher, we cannot be said to have a Complete Revolution in our life. Thus,

Moral Revolution is the first great necessity of our social and political life.

In political life we are the least moral. Even some of our great leaders have sacrificed moral principles for their personal gains in power and position and money. Our nation will never rise and become prosperous until and unless our moral standard is raised. Moral Re-armament, as it has been called by some, should be the first aspect of the Complete Revolution in India. The Caste-system, determined by birth in a particular family, is another great defect in our national life. It must be abolished in the form it exists at present. All castes should be reduced to the four *varnas*, determined by *Guna* and *Karma*, as the *Bhagavad-Gita* says, which should be psychologically tested and examined. There should be no preference given to birth or colour in determining the *varna* of a particular individual. Psychological tests in mental and physical abilities, and the nature of professional fitness should determine the *varna* of an individual, and he should be allowed legally to belong to that *varna* alone.

In political life, the Complete Revolution, according to me, would mean that only fit and proper persons, who have done some selfless social service, and who are not seekers of money and power, should be allowed to be legislators or administrators. No party should select such persons. Only the voice of the people concerned should be the determining factor. Our political life should be governed by ethical principles, and politics should not invade our social and ethical life. Non-ethical politics has been the bane of Indian life. Our political leaders should be saintly, and our saints should not be politically-minded as they are becoming today.

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SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE OCCASION

V.V. GIRI*

I had the pleasure of knowing Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan from 1932 and his life has been one of sacrifice and suffering in the interests of the country. The same may be said of his partner in his life who made every sacrifice to make his life bearable in all that he did.

We had common interests in many matters and believed in the formation of a Socialist State at the earliest opportunity. We took pleasure in organising the Railway Labour in India and today it is a great force in the Labour world. He believed in sacrificing everything for the underdog in India as Mahatma Gandhi believed.

He was distinctly of the idea that mere attainment of political Swaraj had no meaning, if it was not automatically followed by economic Swaraj, wherein the common man, woman and child are guaranteed by the State, enough food to eat, enough clothes to wear and a decent hut to live in, and reasonable social benefits from the womb to the grave.

Inspite of the earnest desire of our leaders for the attainment of economic emancipation of the masses, the well-meaning Five-Year Plans, spread over the last 25-years, have failed to achieve the desired objective. 55 per cent of the population in India are still living below the poverty line.

On the other hand, the cost of living is steadily rising, making meagre living impossible The evils of poverty and unemployment

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are recording a steep rise, raising the quantum of discontent, among the masses, which might soon reach a peak of no return, ending perhaps in a serious revolution.

Mere sympathy, or plans on paper, cannot solve the problem, but by a serious review of the concept of planning. Planning in a vast sub-continent like ours should have started from the grass-root level meaning villages of India, as this would have brought about the involvement of the masses which might have given them a sense of participation in national reconstruction, and thus mistaken acts of omission and commission in planning could have been avoided and perhaps there might have been some significant progress on the economic front.

Once, when I advocated that planning should start from the bottom and not from the top. I was severely criticised by the bureaucrats. However, this ideology is slowly changing and Gandhi's concept of deploying plans to start from the village base is fast gaining ground. This will bring about the desired effect.

No plan can profess success unless it starts from the grass-root level, with percept and practice going hand-in-hand. Gandhlji knew that national planning was a gigantic task, with hurdles at every stage. To overcome such a situation, he had offered political and social workers this simple advice, "Recall the face of the poorest and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it ? Will it restore his control over his own life and destiny ? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and virtually starving millions ?"

Gandhiji rightly said as early as in 1922, that if we did not succeed in our ideals of securing the fundamental rights adumberated in our constitution, it was entirely due to the fact that we suffered from the seven evils in life confronting the country :

1. Politics without principles.
2. Wealth without work,
3. Pleasure without consicence.
4. Knowledge without character.
5. Commerce without morality,
6. Service without humanity, and
7. Worship without sacrifice.

If the prophetic warning was heeded by the nation, India today would have stood out as a shining example for other nations

to follow. Our great Leader, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, believed in the organisation of the nation from the very grass-roots. He desired that Panchayat Raj should be built in the first instance, in every village in India. He, like Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, wanted to look to the interests of the 'have-nots' but unfortunately 30 years of political independence have not secured these fundamental rights. Unless even now if this problem is tackled not by mere words and speeches but by action and action alone, the 'have-nots' represented by the people, living below the poverty line, all socially backward classes, like Harijans, Girijans, agricultural labourers, industrial labour and economically backward sections of the community like the lower middle class, have to form themselves into a well united forum, with a political base to secure for themselves economic emancipation, and free themselves from the ruthless wrath of exploitation and the grave dangers of poverty and unemployment.

It must be said of our great leaders that if today political parties have realised that all should unite in securing the socialistic pattern of society, there is hope for the country but it must also be admitted that they merely believed in making speeches but not taking up the matter from the grass-roots. It is impossible for the 'have-s' to realise the difficulties faced by the 'have-nots'. In the year 1932, our great leader Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, made a prophetic announcement that unless this problem of 'have-s' and 'have-nots' has been squarely settled, this may result in a revolution, not conducive to the happiness of nation.

This calls for a serious reflection and introspection by all those genuinely wedded to the noble concept of socialistic pattern of society.

I wish our great leader will live long so that his conceptions of building the Panchayat Raj are realized in a perfect manner so that the people in the country may secure the fundamental rights adumbrated in our Constitution. If we can produce real and effective leaders of the genuine type similar to Lokanayak Jayaprakash Narayan, there is still a possibility of India not only securing happiness by itself but lead other nations to secure the same.

To sum up, Labour and Poverty-stricken people should join together in the country following the principles of Mahatma Gandhi so that the people in India may enjoy the ideals set by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Shri **Jayaprakash Narayan.**

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ROOTS OF STRUGGLE

AJIT BHATTACHARJEA

Every road had been travelled before. Each village was familiar. Once again the rivers were in spite in north Bihar in August, huts marooned, crops destroyed, at places the flood seemed to stretch to the Himalayan foothills from there the Gandak, the Kosi and 20 other rivers poured melted snow and monsoon water into the broad Gangetic plain. As so often before, village families were carrying whatever they could rescue to higher ground. Others waited in their marooned mud huts for the flood to subside. It could take weeks. Few knew that millions had been sanctioned for flood-protection works in the previous 25 years. Those who did, also knew enough of corruption to shrug their shoulders. Only the buffaloes and the children riding them into the water looked happy—when they were not too hungry. South of the swollen Ganga, not 50 miles away, rainfall had been poor, the crops were turning yellow and local rivers were still muddy streams. That, too, was the Bihar he knew.

Tubewells and the transmission lines serving them were the only new features on the landscape. But they looked silly surrounded by flood-waters. And in the south, where they were needed, power supply was irregular, often coming on only at night. The ambitious Damodar Valley Corporation, modellded on America's well known Tennessee Valley Authority, was proving another disappointment—it had not tamed the river, nor was it generating the power expected.

Otherwise, he could well have been travelling there more than four decades earlier, when he had first toured the country intensively to establish the Congress Socialist Party, a group formed with some of the best young minds of the time—Ram Manohar Lohia, Asoka Mehta, Minoo Masani, Yusuf Meharally, Achyut Patwardhan—to try and inject the conservative lawyer-dominated freedom movement with Marxist activism. It was an outstanding group, responding with intelligence, sensitivity, and knowledge of political development abroad to the contrary attractions of power and morality that have agonized our times, symbolized for them by the teachings of Gandhi and Marx. He was an avowed Marxist at the time, fresh from radical associations on American campuses. But the pull that the struggle for independence exerted on his emotions had proved far stronger than the intellectual appeal of a foreign ideology and, chip by chip, the realities of India eroded his attachment to Marxist dogma. He joined the Indian National Congress instead of the Communist Party of India. Soon he was appointed acting general secretary of the Congress and followed other leaders to jail. Tall, stringly handsome, combining intellectual brillance with human sentiment, writing in English with a clarity that rivalled Nehru's, he had soon attracted the attention of Jawaharlal, 13 years his senior. His Hindi was even better, inspite of seven years in the United States. He could sit on the floor with the remotest villager, especially from his home province, for he came from a poor middle class family and was at home even in the native Bhojpuri dialect.

Or the time could have been January 1934, when he took part in his first relief operation to help victims of the disastrous Bihar earthquake. (In later years, frequent droughts and floods gave full scope to his talent for attracting volunteers and donations) Or, 1942, when, escaping from Hazaribagh jail, he organized an armed guerrilla campaign against the British colonial regime that made him an instant hero of every student frustrated by Mahatma Gandhi's insistence on non-violence. He was rearrested. But, when he emerged from prison on the eve of Independence, it was Gandhi who suggested he become president of the Congress Party so that his countrywide popularity next only to Nehru's, could be used to unite and inspire the Party when its senior leaders yielded to the temptations of ministerial office. And possibly, also because

his village-oriented, non-elitist attitude could provide a corrective to the far from revolutionary case with which Nehru slipped into the shoes of the defunct British Raj in his Fabian commitment to state socialism and industrialization. But Nehru and the established Congress leadership reacted negatively and a tired and disillusioned Gandhi did not insist.

Or, it could have been later, when he was touring Bihar in the early fifties to campaign unsuccessfully for candidates put up by a separate Socialist Party formed when he and his colleagues found it impossible to function within the Congress after Independence. Despite the breach, he was regarded as the next Prime Minister, and was invited to join the cabinet. But, he turned down the offer when Nehru refused to commit himself to a specific minimum programme. The Socialist Party, too, almost split on the issue, with Ram Manohar Lohia insisting that there should be no compromise with the Congress. And then the new party had proved no match for the Congress in organizing ability or in raising money. It had split completely thereafter, as parties formed by uncompromising intellectuals so often do.

It was about this time, too, that he lost faith in the Westminster-style parliamentary system that India had lifted, with very few changes, from Britain He had bern sceptical about it for a long time. The first general election held in 1952, under India's new republican constitution confirmed his doubts. The temptation to indulge in demagoguery—excite sectarian passions, tell halftruths, make impossible promises, and spend huge sums in the process—proved to be overwhelming with an illiterate and fragmented electorate. What made things worse was the fact that the bigger and more successful parties had little internal democracy. They were run by a small clique of bosses, and it was they who nominated and financed party candidates.

Another ideological watershed crossed in the fifties concerned the role of state power. Fascism he had rejected much carlier, but the experience of Soviet Russia showed him that irrespective of the ideals inspiring communism, a strong state apparatus that treated all opposition as treason, led to dictatorship and tyranny, not freedom in any sense. The last variation of a state-dominated economic and political system in which he lost faith was the welfare state which he found destructive of local initiative, encouraging dependence on a remote and corruptible elite. This

was equally sub-versive of democracy which he viewed as a system that encouraged the individual, and even more than the individual the community, to develop according to its own native genius. And so he came to accept fully the Gandhian preference for minimum government and maximum independent community initiative.

He did not give up his socialist stance or his interest in political developments. The reasons he gave for his withdrawal from party and power politics in a letter to his party colleagues in 1957, illustrate the clarity of his thinking. After describing the process of realization that reliance on state power inevitably involves curtailment of freedom, he defined his goal, which was "to create and develop forms of socialist living through the voluntary endeavour of the people rather that seek to establish socialism by the use of the power of the state. In other words, the remedy is to establish people's socialism rather than state socialism." Seven years later, this commitment was put to test. Nehru was ailing. The end was near when his closest colleague in the cabinet—and the man who in fact would succeed him as Prime Minister—the modest but capable Lal Bahadur Shastri, approaches J.P. The proposal was that J.P. should be the next Prime Minister. But, he was not tempted.

He also resented the individualism on which the one-man-one-vote principle was based and feared it would atomize Indian society as it had done in the West, reducing the individual to "a grain of sand in a sand heap," alienated from his family and social environment. He felt certain that a community approach to social change and to the choice of legislators would suit the country better if the village community was shorn of its traditional injustices. (Unlike the Nehru brand of socialists, he thought in rural rather than urban terms.) And so he began to put more stress on the idea of a "communitarian society" on the village-panchayat pattern in which the individual would function like "a living cell in a living organization," and of a "partyless democracy" in which the primary unit would take decisions by consensus and delegate powers for regional, national, and international functions to secondary units. Political parties, in the sense of power groups, would, therefore, have no role to play. He had come to this thesis by analyzing the defects of industralized Western societies and hoped it was not too late for India to adopt a different course.

His new conviction brought him even closer to the people. And so the tour could have been taking place at any time in the years after he had finally left party politics to plunge into the Bhoodan (voluntary land-sharing) movement sponsored by Acharya Vinoba Bhave, widely accepted as Gandhi's spiritual heir. Following the honoured tradition of selfless, inward-looking seers and prophets, Vinoba Bhave had emphasized the spiritual aspect of the Mahatma's legacy, depending exclusively on conversion, rejecting any form of coericion. He had worked out an entire technique and model of comprehensive social change based on voluntary sharing and self-regulating village units.

Although a committed Sarvodaya (Gandhian) social worker by 1961, J.P.'s presidential address to the 13th All-India Sarvodaya Sammelan that year made it clear that he had not renounced politics in every sense. He was explaining what the Sarvodaya disinterest in party politics meant. In view of what happened 13 years later, his speech was pregnant with warning and almost prophetic in nature. "It means, of course," he said. "that we do not belong to any political party, that we do not and shall not take part, directly, or indirectly, in any political contest for position or power. But does it also mean that we are not concerned with what is happening in the political field with the working of our democracy and its various institutions? If democracy were to be in peril, if there was danger of political chaos, of dictatorship, shall we sit back smugly and twiddle our thumbs on the ground that we have nothing to do with politics? Perhaps it is not understood clearly that our policy not be involved in party and power politics is meant precisely to enable us to play a more effective and constructive part in moulding the politics of the country."

The landscape had not changed appreciably. His thinking had. To some extent, it involved a going back, a return to the emphasis on militancy, on resistance to a corrupt and oppressive power structure that stemmed from his Marxist years. He felt as strongly as ever about social injustice. Nothing really changed, he realized almost reluctantly, just because radical laws were passed or high-minded gestures like Bhoodan made, unless continuing social or political pressures ensured that reforms were actually implemented and pledges honoured.

But his disenchantment did not make him go all the way back to militant Marxism. He had become totally disillusioned with

Indian communists in the pre-Independence period for changing their attitude to the freedom movement as directed by the twists and turns of the Kremlin's tactical formulations based on Russia's national interest. Subsequently he had rejected Marxism itself on the ground that it provided no ethical reason to improve society. Nothing that had happened had made him change these views. But now he also remembered that Gandhi had not relied exclusively on "conversion by gentle persuasion," but also, "when the situation required," on "non-violent non-co-operation or resistance." He remained committed to the use of people's power rather than state power to achieve social change.

In spite of the different political labels he had worn, his underlying concern for freedom and liberty has been consistent. It was in this quest that he had been attracted to one political thesis after another, and rejected them when he found that in the name of promoting freedom, they placed constraints on it. For him freedom was a comprehensive concept involved in every aspect of an individual's life in society—his schooling social contacts, occupation, needs and ambitions. Association with Gandhi had infused his concept of freedom with an ethical flavour. Without it, he had come to realize quite early, man could be no more than a pawn in the grip of blind economic or political forces. Only the desire to do good distinguished man from brute and provided the incentive to do better. For the same reason, he rejected the economic thesis or ever-expanding wants, thus teaching though not as strictly as Gandhi, the need for moderation and self-discipline. This was not a philosophy designed exclusively for India. He had come to it after close study of Western and Marxist values which shared the self-defeating motivation of mounting meterial wants.

It was after a three-week self-purificatory fast in Poona in 1952, that he had faced up fully to the unfashionable, non-Marxist concept of goodness in words that would become even more relevant in the future :

> . . .the problem of human goodness is of supreme moment today. The individual asks today why he should be good. There is no god, no soul, no morality, no life hereafter, no cycle of birth and death. He is merely an organization of matter, fortuitiously brought into being and destined soon to dissolve into the infinite ocean of matter, He sees all-round

> him evil succeed—corruption, profiteering, lying, deception, cruelty, power politics, violence. He asks naturally why he should be virtuous. Our social forms of today and the materialist philosophy which rules the affairs of men answer back : he need not. The cleverer he is, the more gifted, the more courageously he practices the new amorality; and, in the coils of this amorality the dreams and aspirations of mankind become warped and twisted.
>
> For many years I have worshiped at the shrine of the goddess Dialectical Materialism which seemed to me intellectually more satisfying than any other philosophy. But while the main quest of philosophy remains unsatisfied, it has become patent to me that materialism of any sort robs man of the means to become truly human. In a material civilization man has no rational incentive to be good.

He was at his best with small groups of students—a Socrates-like figure, teaching them to question the conventional and honour only the valuable. He would not lead a revolution to victory, but he could inspire it, long after he had gone. Indeed, the question of victory did not arise; it was a process he was staring, which, like learning, could never be completed.

These lines being written after J.P. has returned once again to his modest, lonely home in Patna after seven weeks in Bombay and three in the United States for treatment to arrest the painful and debilitating effect of his dependence on dialysis three times a week, to stay alive. His condition has not improved despite a dramatic dash half-way around the globe to a Seattle hospital to ease the painful process of linking his shrinking blood vessels to an artificial kindney machine. He remains as dependent on it as before. He had stayed in Bombay to be near expert medical assistance and modern hospital equipment, but there was no stable improvement in his condition, which varied from day to day. On medical advice, he had lived in a luxurious penthouse apartment provided by his friend, Ramnath Goenka, above the Indian Express skyscraper to get as much rest as 'possible. But he was isolated there from the crucial political development that would determine India's future and from the common people he had identified himself with for so long. He was surviving on will power and his concern for his country; so he returned to Patna once again, the capital of a

State that represented more vividly than any other all that had gone wrong in the thirty years of Congress rule after India become independent.

Spurning, as always, power or political office, J.P. could only hope to influence events by his ability to arouse public opinion. He had turned down a proposal that he be nominated for election as President of the Republic though there was no doubt that he would have been elected if he had agreed to stand. Although, the ruling Janata Party owed its electoral victory primarily to him, most of its leaders would have preferred him to be confined within the formal trappings of this largely ceremonial office to avert embarrassment. Some had come to the point of regarding him as an enfeebled crank whom they could not afford to antagonise publicly. It was as if the calendar had gone back thirty years, with the leaders of a newly-independent India embarrassed by the views and reactions of Mahatma Gandhi who had led them to freedom but could not conceal his unhappiness with the lust for power that grew among them; their uncritical acceptance of foreign political, economic and social models, especially from the West and the Soviet Union; and their inability to fashion, even consider, indigenous remedies for indigenous problems that were so different in nature to those faced by foreign countries. J.P. did not have the health or the discipline that the Mahatma still retained, in 1947; but he had the same vision, the same empathy with the rural poor and the same ability to break out of the limitations of a rigid ideology or system and seek ways to promote new processes leading towards greater freedom and self-reliance, and minimising dependence on the government. He was greater than Gandhi, perhaps, in his vision of, and commitment to, freedom in the widest sense of the word. Throughout his life, any threat to freedom, anywhere, provoked an instant response from him.

That was the cause of the agony and self-doubt expressed in his *Prison Diary* when he found that the mass movement he had encouraged and guided in an effort to make the poorest and most under-privileged Indian aware and jealous of his rights, had in fact provided the Indira Gandhi government with an excuse to impose a more authoritarian and callous form of government on the country than it had experienced even under colonial rule. The limited reaction against this move towards despotism, even when its nature become clear by the steps taken to transfer supreme

power to her second son, Sanjay, made him wonder whether he had overrated Indira's commitment to a free society. But, he continued his efforts to unite the non-communist parties and to prepare the people to vote against authoritarianism as and when opportunity arose. Few of his friends and colleagues were of the same faith or hope for such an opportunity. They urged him to be realistic. It was J.P.'s faith and prescience, however, that won out in the end.

But that was not the end; at best a new process had begun. The new Janata ministers were not impervious to the corrupting influence of power and patronage, magnified to many times over in a poor country. And so the struggle to create and strengthen counter-balancing institutions and new, uncorrupted channels through which the under-privileged could impress their demands on the government, continued.

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POLITICS OF JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

SUBHASH CHANDRA SARKAR

Jayaprakash Narayan has shunned party politics and has been talking of village reconstruction and panchayati raj. He has even earned the opprobius nickname of being a Sarvodaya leader. To talk of his politics may appear irrelevant' if not actually sacrilegeous. Yet it is possible, nay necessary, to understand the politics of Jayaprakash Narayan if one has to understand the man and his views. The publication together of his articles and speeches on the subject of panchayati provides an oppportunity for such an examination. Some may wonder if the political ideas of a person are capable of being derived from his articles and speeches on panchayati raj. But it is very much possible to do so, since the objective of political action in this country as in any other country, is to re-organize the economic and social structures no less than the political structure. And panchayati raj not only involves the economic and social aspects of Indian society but the political aspect as well. Indeed there may be no better way of knowing the real character of the political views of Jayaprakash Narayan than by referring to his articles and speeches on the subject of the much publicized but little understood (or realized) panchayati raj. The reason is simple. Since four-fifths of the people of the country live in the villages and since it is again in the villages that both the core and the bulk of Indian poverty are to be found, it is only with reference to a person's views on the detailed problems of the villages in the country, and the means of their solution, that one can hope to

gain an insight into his political mind. Such an examination of a person's views would enable one to know wheather his views are worth while in the context of the nation's striving to lift itself out of the morass in which it finds itself today. What do we find Jayaprakash wants through his talks and articles on panchayati raj and gram swaraj ?

VILLAGE ISOLATION UNDESIRABLE

Let us first examine his views on the villages. Does he wish to leave them as they are ? The answer is clearly in the negative. Jayaprakash wants the villages of India to be liberated from their clositered existence He writes, "Among our national leaders there are not a few who look back upon the largely vanished village self-sufficiency as an ideal to go back to. I find myself in opposition to such a view. I believe that if free Indian society and the Indian people are to prosper, are to develop a sense of common and co-operative life, if national unity is to become real; if the divorce from national politics of the mass of the people—which was such a glaring aspect of past Indian society—is to be removed; if parochialism and clannishness are to be banished; if rigours of the iniquitous caste system which flourished on the fertile soil of village self-sufficiency and family specialisation of labour are to be destroyed; if democracy and self-government are to be made effectual; if all these objectives are to achieved; the free Indian State will have consciously,to endeavour to break up remaining self-sufficiency and isolation of the villages and make them 'coherent economic units' in united and interdependent national economy."

It is clear that when Jayaprakash talks of village self-government he does not speak of keeping the village away from the mainstream of national life but rather of establishing an integral and mutully beneficial relationship between the villages, and between the villages and the national industrial economy. To quote Jayaprakash, "It is necessary to add that the break-up of self-sufficiency that is emphasised here does not mean that the village would be placed at the mercy of international markets and the city capitalists. Far from it. What I am suggesting is the village as a fully protected economic unit (protected both by the state and co-operation in the village itself), not independent or self-sufficient but interconnceted, not according to the blind laws of capitalist

competition and exploitation, but to a national and regional plan". (pp. 46-47)

DEMOCRACY'S NARROW BASE

This would invariably involve the modernization of village economy and reorganization of the social life villages. In other words the villages would have to undergo a radical transformation which has been part of the national objective for years. Indeed this would mean the extension of democracy to the villages and to the masses of the people. Writing ten years ago Jayaprakash made an incisive appraisal of the wekness of the base of democracy in India. "The most striking fact that has emerged from the working of ten years of our Constitution," Jayaprakash wrote in 1961, "is that the people of the country, that is to say, the twenty crores of voters, have felt rather left out of it all. They have no doubt had the opportunity of participating in two General Elections, but beyond that transient contact with the working of democracy, they have had nothing further to do with it. It is very common to hear the remark made by common people even in the country-side that though *Swaraj* came, it had not come to them. They complain that they are ruled much in the same manner and by the same kind of people as during the British rule. They find that not even in local affairs have they a hand or that even the humblest civil servant is in any manner accountable to them; on the contrary, they find that he lords it over them and even exacts illegal gratification as much as in the old days. The truth must be faced that the people have not been able to experience the sensation of *Swaraj*. It is only the very thin layer of the educated middle class, and even of them only those directly engaged in political activity, who are involved in the working of our democracy. The result of this state of affairs is that our democracy is found to be resting on a very narrow base." (p 70)

Village isolation has been broken during the quarter of a century from the time when Jayaprakash first gave the call for the breaking down of the static isolationism of the villages. The tragedy is that this breakdown has not taken place in the manner in which Jayaprakash envisaged it to take place but is just the contrary manner. The breakdown of the village autonomy has no strengthened the villages by integrating them with the national economy.

On the other hand, without education and organization the greater exposure of the villages to the forces of the highly centralist industrial economic forces has rendered them weaker and more helpless, causing the further destitution of the vast masses of the rural people as can be seen in the rising number of the landless agricultural labourers. Therefore, the problem of rural poverty remains as baffling as ever. If it is not fashionable even in the circle of socialists (a seminar on socialist thought organized at Patna was inaugurated by a retired ICS officer who, besides enjoying an attractive pension which is higher than the salary of most working Indians, also occupies an important place in the ruling bureaucracy notwithstanding his formal retirement) : to discuss rural destitution and backwardness, Jayaprakash Narayan, despite his giving up active politics, has not forgotten the central problem of Indian economics, politics and sociology—rural poverty and backwardness :

Jayaprakash is a democrat, a believer in the need for peaceful change. Therefore, he has settled in the Musahari block in Muzaffarpur district since 9 June, 1970 to lend the force of his personality for the introduction of necessary social and economic changes. What he wants, what all the political parties of the country also want, is the extension of democracy to the rural masses. Yet nothing much has happened to reduce the helplessness of the rural poor before the oppressors and the exploiters. The continuation of such a system is clearly against the national interest, Already violence has raised its head in many parts of the country and the main difficulty faced by the authorities is the lack of feeling of many of any stake in the preservation of the system. The need, if democracy is to be saved and made real for the common man in India, is to make it of use to the people (and not only to the few educated and the affluent) and create a popular stake in its survival. Unless that is done "at the slightest push the pyramid of democracy standing on its head would topple down and the millions of particles of sand, viz., 'the disorganized voters, would look on as helpless spectators." (p. 71) Thus, whether one is a votary of democracy or a votary of the revolution (essentially there is no contradiction between the genuine believers in democracy which rests on equality and the genuine belivers of social and political revolution which is the means of bringing about that equality) Jayaprakash Narayan's analysis retains equal relevance.

CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

The fundamental point of distinction in Jayaprakash Narayan's stand is that he wants the recognition of the role of the millions living in villages in the running of the country. So far the practice has been to hand down a decision from New Delhi or the State Capitals to the people. There is no doubt that the national and the State Governments will have to play a positive role of providing leadeship and that many of the decisions of the Central and the State Government have been inspired by a genuine desire to do good to the people. Equally undoubted is the fact, however, that these measures have signally failed to bring about any improvement in the life of the vast masses, the majority of whom are living below subsistence level, according to a study of the Reserve Bank of India. Jayaprakash Narayan is purturbed by this failure and sees a way out in activising the rural masses in taking a positive role. An example can illustrate the point : The Bihar Government headed by Mr Krishna Ballabh Sahay had passed a good law on bataidari. It was a decision handed by the State Government. But it has remained unimplemented. Herein is to be seen the utter limitation of an initiative from the top for which there is no sustenance at the base In making a fervent plea for village self-government, Jayaprakash wants these good Central and State measures to be fully implemented for popular welfare. Jayaprakash effectively rebuts the theory that extension of democracy to the base will lead to the weakening of unity. He says that the result will be to the contrary. Jayaprakash says, "political and economic decentralization and strengthening of the lower organs of government might make it appears as if that process would weaken the fabric of the nation and impair the strength and unity of the Centre. The fact that fissiparous tendencies do exist in the country, and there are local and linguistic patriotism and tensions, lends force to this view. Bnt, a closer examination of the matter would show that we would be far more cohesive and strong as a nation, and the diverse groups making up India would live together far more happily, if they had as much freedom and opportunity as possible to manage their affairs and preserve and develop their uniqueness." (p. 74)

Unfortunately not many in this country realize the need for the devolution of authority from the Centre to the States and from

the States to the panchayats and villages. Jayaprakash warned as early as in 1961, "It is not without reason that those in India who advocate a unitary form of government have marked fascistic tendencies." (p. 74) The decade that has passed since he had uttered the warning against centralization has not seen any relaxation in that trend of usurping authority but has been marked by a further accentuation of the process of centralization of authority and functions. The past quin-quennium was marked by a complete rer-eading of the meaning of the constitution to deprive the States of their authority particularly through the creation of various central police forces despite the fact that the Constitution made the State Government responsible for the maintenance of law and order. This was made possible by the spinelessness of the Congress leaders in the State's, the weakness of the non-Congress governments formed in the wake of the fourth general election in 1957, and the supine subservience of the press in general to the Central Government whose words were accepted as gospel truth by the metropolitan newspapers to run down the State Governments. Whether it was the States desire to be consulted over the appointment of the Governor or it was the State government's desire to be consulted before the deployment of the Central police force, the Central Government, with the active support of the press, trampled upon those desires with ruthless firmness which could have been better employed in arresting disruption and punishing dishonest politicians and civil servants. Despite the assumption of greater powers and the acquisition of additional organizational strength it is not certain that the Central government has gained any greater effectiveness than it had say in 1961 when Jayaprakash Narayan uttered his warning against centralization. On the other hand, there are unmistakable signs of decreasing effectiveness of the Central government's actions. Why? Ten years ago Jayaprakash had clearly foreseen the answer to this question. He wrote, "Devolution of power, so that the Centre has only as much of it as required to discharge its *Central* functions, and all the rest is exercised by the lower organs, need not necessarily imply a weak Centre. It is all a matter of competence; at each level the elected authority does all that it is competent to do. And, because at each level the authority concerned finds that there are tasks that lie beyond its competence, it has to federate with other authorituies at the same level so as to

create a higher level of authority." It is this factor of competence that is a guarantee of the strength of the Centre in this system, because it is in the interest of the lower authorities to give all power and opportunity to the Centre to do efficiently and expeditiously all that they themselves cannot do. Defence, foreign affairs, inter-State relations, currency, regulation of imports and exports, preservation of national unity are, for instance, tasks that fall within the competence only of the Centre. A central government that is armed with these powers cannot by any stretch of imagination be described as weak, just because the range of subjects in its charge is not so wide. Indeed, such a government would be bound to be strong, powerful, streamlined and effective. On the other hand, a top-heavy sprawling Centre, poking its finger into every pie, might have the appearance of strength and power but in actual fact, it would be weak, flabby, slow-moving, and ineffective." (pp. 74-75)

It is not only the politician in power or the bureaucracy, but a considerable section of the intelligentsia also, that fails to realise the truth that, to quote Jayaprakash Narayan, "National unity or strength does not depend upon the list of subjects that a Central government deals with, but on such intangible factors as emotional integration, common experiences and aspirations, National ethos, mutual goodwill and the spirit of accommodation, and above all upon large-hearted wisdom on on the part of national leaders." (p. 75)

Jayaprakash realises the fact that the improvement of the lot of the villagers has to be made the task of villagers themselves. The village people have to give a thought to their problems to find out a solution. Undoubtedly the strength of the national industrial economy would be there for the villagers to fall back upon; but without local initiative the villagers would not be able to derive the fullest advantage of the benefits of the infrastructure i.e., electricity, supply of steel and machinery—created by large-scale and heavy industries. The level of awareness which alone can enable a social group to act so wisely, villagers cannot imbibe themselves—at any rate in the short run. There lies the need for leadership. Who can provide that leadership ? Jayaprakash says, "In order that this task is successfully tackled there must be a large band of selfless workers to inspire, arouse, help and guide the people." (p. 103). Very true, indeed. But is this concept of "a

large band of selfless workers" compatible with distrust of the political parties which is to be met with in Jayaprakash's writings ? For example Jayaprakash writes that "it is well worth emphasizing that the success of panchayati raj would depend upon the extent to which organized political parties refrained from interfering with it trying to convert it into their hand-maiden, and using it as a jumping ground to climb power." (p. 77) Then from where will the leadership come ? The villagers are illiterate, ignorant and unable to provide the leadership, Jayaprakash thinks that it can be expected of the panchayat parishad. He writes, "It should be the job of the panchayat parishad to instil in the minds of the members and office-bearers of the panchayats the requisite spirit of service and sacrifice. The spirit of self-seeking and power-grabbing, that is often noticed, would more effectively destroy panchayati raj than anything else." (p. 103) While Jayaprakash's warning that power politics would destroy panchayati raj has come true, his hope that the panchayati raj institutions would succeed in throwing up the requisite leadership has not been realized why has it been so ?

An analysis of the situation discloses the fact that the panchayati raj institutions could not become effective organs of popular power because, in the pecuilar power structure existing in the country, the panchayati raj institutions have been seized by the rural vested interests. The dread of the mukhiya in many place symbolizes the failure of the system to work for the purpose for which it was thought of. In political terms the panchayati raj institutions became the haunting ground of the rural rich enjoying the patronage of the Congress Party. The natural corrollary of the situation is that without the greater politicization of the masses in the rural areas it is impossible to generate dynamism which can bring about the desired changes in the rural society. In many places the panchayati raj institutions carry the authority of being part of the governmental machinery. The preponderance of the rural rich and upper caste men in these organizations has meant the strengthening of the forces of the *status quo* by imparting upon their action in many places a legal sanction. It is a most undesirable political situation from which their is no release except through political action. Perhaps it is necessary to re-examine Jayaprakash's opposition to the introduction of party politics in the rural areas and his emphasis on avoiding contests

in the election to the panchayati raj organs. (p. 80) Perhaps it is the introduction of partisan politics alone that can create some dynamism in the basically static situation of the Indian countryside. Perhaps it is through contests again that the weaker sections of the rural community may come to acquire the self-confidence on which alone depends the regeneration of village life in India. Perhaps Jayaprakash would find some time to review the events of the decade that has passed since he had put forward his views, and restate his thesis in the light of the changed circumstances.

It is as much a duty of the political parties and the intelligentsia, though. For the basic task of improving India consists in improving the villages. So long the parties have considered their task done by shouting about the supermacy of agriculture. The consequence of this unthinking slogan-mongering has been the further reinforcement of the rural inequality through governmental subsidy to the landed gentry in the villages, in the form of subsidizing electricity connections and the supply of agricultural pumps, etc. There is a very real danger of a retrogression in the countryside. Unfortunately no party has got any organization in the rural areas. The Congress weakness was so long disguised by the identification in the public mind of government and the Congress. Now that the Congress is no longer in power in several States that identification has broken down. In any case if the Congress party was capable of bringing about rural regeneration it had an ample opportunity to do so during the past two decades. If it could not do so during the heyday of its power it is not reasonable to place much reliance on its ability and willingness to do so in the future. Therefore, the other parties are all the more under a great obligation to give an active consideration to the matter. On the degree of conscientiousness with which the political parties address themselves to this task would depend the fulilment of the hope the elimination of rural poverty and backwardness.

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J.P.—HIS IDEAS

JAINARAYAN SAHAYA*

In evaluating J.P.'s some friends are treating his last phase, that is, the phase commencing with the assumption of the leadership of the student movement in Bihar in 1974 till his end, as a break with and repudiation of his immediately preceding phase in which he had devoted himself to the cause of non-violent social revolution through Bhoodan and Gram-dan, socio-economic devolution and decentralisation of power, and to the cause of partyless and participatory democracy This indeed is a short-sighted and unfair study of him. A deeper study would reveal that his whole life has been a continuous process and development, and every succeeding phase has grown out of the previous phase as a natural logical sequence.

From his young days, two facets in his character are clearly discernible : his total devotion to the service of man without personal reservation, and pragmatic pursuit of his idealism. The form and forum in and through which his services found expression did change from time to time depending upon the prevailing situation, but the dedication and the fundamental objective remained the same. The impulse behind it was never less than total, never tainted with any personal consideration. And since he had no personal axe to grind, even in a subtle form, he was naturally saved from doctrinaire rigidness or self-glorifactory

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messiahism. Explorer and seeker of truth ever, he never lacked courage to move from one position to another, to shift from one postulate to another, but these were not denunciations or repudiation but scientific development so to say. In a letter written in thirtees to late Shree Murli Manohar Prasad, the then editor of Searchlight, he had written, "I am a socialist because I believe that socialism can solve the problems of my country and that it gives a better technique of mass revolution including an a national revolution". At the same time he reiterated the Gandhites and Socialists both could march together hand in hand and the companionship could remain unbroken till the final goal of the Congress was achieved. Socialism as then understood, was inspired by Marx and undoubetedly J P.'s Socialism of those days derived its logic from Marx and Lenin. But his wedding to Socialism was that of a scientist, to the extent of research and discovery reached so far, which did not put any premium on future research and development. As he himself held, "No philosophy, no science if it does not claim supra-origin is ever final. Truth grows by ceaseless elimination of error. The ideas of Marxism did not reach their final shape in the writings of its founders and Lenin. An idea grows and develops just as a tree does. To deny the possibility of development in Marxism is to convert it from social science to religion, rather to othodox religion. History has unfolded through various stages since Marx's time and the social and physical sciences have risen to higher levels of truth. All this knowledge and social experience must be assimilated and Marxism restated and brought up-to-date". This is how he throught not in his Jeevandani phase, but even in the early forties, and it implied no revisionism, no deviation from Marx. He ever remained true to the Marxian concept to free man from exploitation by man and to usher in a non-exploitative social order. And it was this concern and its uninhibited pursuit that carried him from one phase to another.

As he had visualised in the thirties, the Congress Socialist Party parted with the Congress after Independence (through it cannot be said that it was the Gandhian Congress from which it parted. Perhaps at the time of parting, the Congress had betrayed Gandhi and denied its Gandhian heritage) to become the Socialist Party just as earlier M.N. Roy's Committee of Radical Congressemen had become Radical Democratic party. And just as M.N Roy through his long journey came ultimately to Radical Humanism

and partyless democracy, J.P. soon saw the barrenness and counter productivity of beaten "socialist" tracks, and in Gandhi and his throught, promise of human redemption. In turning to Gandhi and the like, J.P. made no deviation from his fundamentals, rather it was his fundamental concern itself which made him see light and hope in Gandhi, and logically his thinking converged with that of M.N. Roy on partyless democracy.

What did this turn in J.P mean? He saw that the use of violence always placed one section of men over others There was no liberation of man. What was achieved by physical force needed physical force to buttress it, and in the clash of forces the very perspective behind struggle become a casuality. He came to believe that revolution to be successful should be based on willing and active co-operation of the people and should cause no ill-feeling. He saw in the Bhoodan Movement of Vinoba possibility of direct social revolution. So long he had felt that constructive programme had by-passed the cause of exploitation, but now he found that Vinoba had linked constructive work to direct revolution and therefore plunged himself whole hog into it. In partyless democracy he saw the possibility of the end of fight for power, a fight which no matter what the slogans raised, spared no scruples and judged everything from the point of subservience to its own purpose. In such a fight people as such took a back seat except to the extent and in the manner they were useful in the fight, not to speak of the dignity and heritage of man as such. He come to the conclusion that party-based politics could not lead to social revolution of his conception. He also came to the conclusion, not in isolation but as components of his whole thinking that centralisation or concentration of power at the social apex led to inevitable suppression, repression and exploitation, and denial of adequate and equal opportunites for all to grow to their full stature. He believed that commensurate with modern conditions, the base of power in the sense of functions and responsibility should be the village and power should go upward in a selective way. He was never against modern technology, but here again, he felt that different levels of technology should be related to varying purposes and social needs, keeping the overall perspective in view that man must be master of the machine and machine should bring prosperity to man, not merely in the limited sense of providing more material luxuries and conveniences but in the sense of making man

freer and happier. As the reflected in the Gandhian Centenary year, "In India after twenty two years of parliamentary politics and planning from above, the people have begun to look more and more towards Gandhi, because the basic problems they face poverty, unemployment, socio-economic justice are very nearly where they were at Independence In the developed and affluent west also one notices with growing interest how the young people particularly university and young teachers are talking of ideas and concepts that are similar to those of Gandhi, such as non-violent resistance, participatory democracy, the supremacy of man over institutions and so on. The world that is living under the shadow of a thermonuclear doom is seeking for a path to peace. Science and technology converted the world into a neighbourhood and sensitive minds have begun to look beyond the nation state to a co-operative and just world order. In all these respects, Gandhi seems to be uniquely relevant to our times." So when he turned to Gandhi he did not repudiate his past but rather reached a new mile-stone in his ceaseless journey, a seeking past viewing the present and prospecting the future.

As early as January 1951, in a letter to Late Sri Ram Briksha Benipuri he had advised that the proposed Bhumi Sena Sammelan to be convened by the Bihar Socialist Party should better be called Gram Navnirman Sammelan and even government experts should be invited to it for advice on development matters. And at the same time he wanted the Conference to discuss the issues of village reconstruction and politics, socialist system in the country, Civil rights and Gram Panchayat, etc. This was a comprehensive approach.

By the middle of sixties, the Bhoodan-Gramdan movement had spent its force, though Rajya Dan in Bihar was announced in 1969. Against the target of five crore acres of land to be collected and distributed in Bihar set by Vinobaji, not more than twenty-one lac acres could be collected and almost three fourths of it were uncultivable waste. Vinobajee after completing his seventieth year had entered "Sukshma" and was no more available for active leadership. The overall condition in the country had deteriorated in all respects, and naturally J.P. was probing hard both "within and without". In his inauguration address at the Insani Biradiri-Khudai Khidmatgar Convention in New Delhi on 16th August, 1970, the concluding sentence was "It seems to me that the task of

promoting human brotherhood requires of us some thing much deeper than belief in secularism, national unity and democracy. More than anything else it requires the true quality of religion-spirituality." It was in such a mental state that he resolved to meet the challenge of Naxalite violence in Musahari Block of Muazaffarpur District in North Bihar in the true Gandhian spirit and way. Then the developments in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, took him on a world tour. On return he resolved to go on one 'year's rest' from 11th October, 1972, when he was to complete his 70th year. In a statement issued in this regard on 11th October, 1971, he said, "what I shall do after the expiry of the period of retreat I do not know, I know only this that until body and mind keep functioning I shall continue to serve my country and the world. I know also that the style of my future work will have to change radically because the present style has proved too wasteful to time and energy, both physcial and mental. More than this I cannot say at present about my future, which really rests in the hands of God." No one knows, nor perhaps he himself knew what course his future life would have taken had things passed as expected, but the restlessness in his mind and the direction in which it was seeking is evident. God decided not only his future after 11th October, 1973, but also the instant present. In November 1971, he suffered from heart trouble and this forced rest of a different sort altogether which was followed by the fatal illness of Prabhabati Devi, his wife, and her passing away in April 1973. As he was passing through these personal suffering and vicissitudes, his soul was restless over the galloping sickness of the Indian Polity. It was in this condition that he gave a call to the youth of the country to rise above their foibles and petty engagements and join in an all out effort to revolutionise the Indian society. Rest is recent history and needs no repetition. But in all that he did, he did not compromise his fundamentals, rather those very fundamentals goaded him on this path. It is true that his programme to build action committees down from the village level with the help of Chhatra Sangharsha Samities and Jan Sangharsha Samities was halted due to certain political exigencies, and he accepted the co-operation of political parties for a limited purpose to meet an emergent situation. But he was fully aware of limitations implicit in this arrangement, and the Tarun Shanti Sena—later as Chhatra Yuva Sangharsha Vahini—and Lok Samities were born out of this

awareness. The success or failure of these bodies depend on them and in no way reflect upon relevance and soundness of the conception or on who conceived them.

J.P.'s has been a legend of complete dedication to the service of man, of ceaseless pursuit with open and searching mind which brooked no inhibitions or reservations, of a pure sensitive heart which melted at the sight of slightest sorrow, grief or hurt, but bore no rancour or ill-will towards any even in the grimmest moments of barberous victimisation and torture, which he bore with rare equanimity and gentle humility, and at the same time of iron will and death-defying courage.

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THE VOICE OF SILENCE

MADHU DANDAVATE*

On June 5, 1974, a silent procession marched through streets of Patna, led by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. The processionists mached to express their agony over corruption and atrocities in Bihar. Their silence was more expressive and eloquent than the loudest protests ever heard in the capital of Bihar. The silent procession represented the will and determination of the youth of Bihar to initiate a non-violent, yet massive, campaign and struggle against the forces of corruption and tyranny in the State. The silence of the procession reminded the residents of Patna of the sound of bullets fired from the rifles of the police on the youngsters who had marched to the Bihar Assembly on March 18, to gherao the legislators that had forfeited the confidence of the people. As the silent procession marched ahead, from many eyes that watched it, tears rolled down to mingle with the blood of the young martyrs.

Jayaprakashji's lead to the silent procession was an expression of his resolve to offer a peaceful and non-violent methodology to combat corruption, rising prices, outdated educational system and unemployment among youth. If Jayaprakash Narayan were not to offer a positive lead to a peaceful revolt, the flames of violence and anarchy would have enveloped Bihar and destroyed democracy.

Under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan the Chhatra

*The then Finance Minister, Government of India.

Sangharsh Samiti and the Jan Sangharsh Samiti had planned a programme of a total revolution through peaceful means emphasising both constructive and combative programmes.

The critics of the agitation in Bihar often over-emphasise Jayaprakashji's concept of 'partyless democracy.' The politically motivated among them do it with the ulterior motive of driving a wedge between JP and the organised political parties in the State. "The parties supporting Shri Jayaprakash Narayan were signing their own death warrant" is the usual warning sounded to the political parties by these critics In his speeches Jayaprakashji has exposed this hypocritical anxiety of these critics about the future of political parties. He has made it explicity clear that though "partyless democracy" continues to be his dream, he has no illusion that this goal could be accomplished only in a classless and casteless society When Lenin spoke of the "withering away of the State" and at the same time wielded power in the most powerful Soviet State, none challenged him for the apparent contradiction between the task of building up a powerful State and his vision of "withering of the State.' The Marxists and Leninists always argue that State would wither away only in a classless society. It is a pity that these critics of Jayaprakash Narayan do not want to give him the same latitude they gave to Lenin.

THE FORGOTTEN TRADITION

One of the planks of the Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti that has come in for a severe attack from the establishment is the call to the students to boycott the universities in Bihar for one year. With an air of pragmatism they ask the question : What can the youngsters achieve by boycotting their studies for a year; will it not mean spelling ruin of their academic career ? All these doubting Thomases have woefully forgotten the tradition and experience of our freedom struggle.

During the national struggles of 1920, 1930 and 1942, the leaders gave a clarion call to the students to leave the universities and colleges and join the mainstream of the freedom struggle. In response, thousands of teachers and students left their institutions and participated in the battle for freedom. Many among them were thrown behind the prison bars and as they came out of the jails they emerged reborn with a new vision and a new sense of

dedication. Their entire attitude to life was changed. A new social awareness was aroused in them and from among them an army of dedicated patriots and political workers was raised. It is this generation that conducted various affairs of our social and political life for over two decades. But as this generation is fading away, a new generation has yet to take its place. For some time in the depoliticalised and deadened atmosphere of the country, it almost appeared as if "we lived between two worlds, one dead and the other powerless to be born." The agitation of youths in Bihar has, however, raised a new ray of hope for the future. If from among the youth who boycott the universities and colleges in Bihar for a year a few thousand emerge with a new vision and a sense of dedication to lead a new life with a new social awareness, the boycott of educational institutions in Bihar will not have gone in vain This can be a positive achievement for the public life of Bihar from the programme of university boycott.

NEW DIMENSION

The leaders of the youth agitation in Bihar are introducing a new dimension in the struggle which was unfortunately lacking in some of their earlier agitations. While, on the one hand, a programme of paralysing the Bihar Government, particularly in the rural areas, through a no-tax campaign, gheraos and satyagraha has begun from August 1, on the other, thousands of students who have boycotted the universities and colleges are being directed to undertake varied constructive activities. The World Health Organisation's report indicates that about 30,000 people died in Bihar last year due to the smallpox epidemic in the absence of adequate vaccination facilities. In the programme planned under the guidance of Jayaprakashji the medical students have been instructed to organise squads in villages to vaccinate the villagers so as to prevent large-scale deaths due to smallpox. Vigilance squads are being organised to prevent irregularities and bribery at the ration shops. These squads in the rural areas will also accompany the villagers who go to the Collectorate and Government offices to ensure that their work is done without bribe. In Patna, the youth will run almost a parallel civic body to cleanse the city of its filth and dirt so as to ensure health and hygiene.

The blueprint of the youth movement in Bihar will thus be a

meaningful essay in struggle and construction. It is here that the dynamic and constructive personality of Jayaprakashji has been projected into the programme of the youth movement in Bihar.

The over-enthusiasts among the constitutionalist in the country see in the Bihar agitation a threat to democracy and parliamentary institutions. They scoff at the extra-constitutional movement to compel the legislators to resign from the Assembly. These armchair constitutionalists do not realise the inadequacy of our Constitution. If India's Constitution were to provide to the electorate for the right to recall the legislators who violate their mandate, extra-constitutional movements to demand the resignation of defaulting legislators or the dissolution of ineffective legislatures would not become necessary. In some countries of Europe their respective Constitutions provide for the right of recall. However, in our country many legislators consider their election as a licence and permit to violate their assurances for five years. Under these circumstances the extra constitutional struggle demanding dissolution of the legislature or resignation of the legislators becomes inevitable.

TOWARDS A NEW ORDER

Those who are carrying on the agitation in Bihar are conscious of the fact that if the present Assembly is dissolved and elections are again held under the same corrupt electoral system in which the will of the people cannot be adequately reflected, the re-elections will be as irrelevent for democracy as in the past. Therefore, under the able guidance of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, the youth are rightly demanding a complete rehauling of the existing electoral system in which the number of seats secured by parties are disproportionate to the votes polled.

The youth agitating against unemployment are also aware of the shortcomings of the present status-quoist educational system which does not reflect the urges of youth, their needs and aspirations in life. In this respect the experts among the educationists who share the agony of the youth and their urges must come forward to provide a new and a radical blueprint for a total reform of the existing educational system.

The Bihar agitation has acquired a multi-dimensional form. It has the intensity to fight injustice and also an earnest desire to

construct a new order. If this experiment succeeds in the laboraratory of Bihar, it will release new energy that will rejuvenate the youth all over the country to build a new India. People are in search of an alternative. This alternative cannot emerge through unprincipled permutations and combinations of parties. A living alternative will emerge only through a dynamic struggle as in Bihar. That is the only hope for the future.

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JP'S MOVEMENT : A POSITIVE ROLE TO PLAY

BRAHMANAND

The student struggle in Bihar led by Jayaprakash Narayan has raised much ballyhoo. It has brought the hornet's nest above his ears. The CPI and the Establishment have combined together in the chorus striking a cacophony of discordant notes.

JP has focussed on some basic ill which have infected the body politic. The country's development will depend on eradication of these ills. The issues relate to price rise, corruption, electoral reform and educational reorganisation. But, to one's surprise, the streamlet of sanity has dried up in the barren and, sterile land of chauvinism and irrationality. When JP raises his finger he is being accused of being a fascist, a friend of the racketees and a reactionary. If he is a sinnner against democracy how will one's "holier than thou" attitude steer the country through the crisis ? It is an irony indeed that one who is a defender of democracy is the target of attacks by the Establishment. The crucifixion of Jesus is being enacted in Indian politics.

Perhaps some may argue that the members of the Establishment claim to be more righteous. But this argument suffers from self-complacency. There are two questions. One, if parliamentary institutions are the only effective means of the communication channels, why has the system in India completely broken down if the input-output relations are the scale of measurement ? Two, if power politics can create wonders, why has the programme of

social change been shelved ? To find an *alibi* for one's failure is easy. But it is not the solution.

NOT AN ICONOCLAST

JP is not an iconoclast; he is a builder of a nation. But his approach and strategy of economic development and reconstruction of India's polity are different from his critics'. JP has been brought up both in the Marxian and Gandhian traditions. But he opted for Gandhian ideas; for they were the only remedy to the problem of poverty and can make the foundation of democracy in this country sound The Congress had rejected Gandhi's idea the moment it took the reins of power and accepted the logic of power. But thereby it sealed the fate of India. There is, therefore a conflict between the two value systems; the one advanced by the Congress is decadent and the other most dynamic and appropriate for countries like India. While the former is based on the elitist concept of power, the other is moulded on people's power. Soviet politics is power-oriented. But the system, whether followed by the Congress or the Soviet Union, is irrelevant and ineffective to eradicate the problem of poverty; nor can it provide the magnificent edifice of democracy.

Dr. Lohia held that accusations are mounting against each other of being for capitalism or communism, for the US or the USSR. but they are unable to slay the twin demons of poverty and war and what they say or do only serves to heighten the demonic quality of these problems. The Soviet model has inherited its technique of production from the capitalistic system. It has smashed the capitalistist relations of production, but is still the continuator and developer of capitalist technology when capitalism is no longer able to do so. What capitalist technology has meant in two-thirds of the world has not been digested in the communist theory.

But, for countries like India, poverty has been and is the main problem. On removal of it hinges the future of democracy and soaialism. The elitist concept of power as followed in either Soviet Russia or in our country is irrelevant and has become outdated. People's power of Gandhi's model is the most suitable and effective. For, keeping in view the failure of decades of planning, Gandhi's ideas are all the more relevant.

The people of this country had suffered most during the

colonial rule; they are still suffering. They are engaged in a grim battle to secure bread, housing and clothes. If this situation continues, it will only weaken the foundation of democracy, let alone of socialism. JP is, therefore, fighting for the suffering millions and for a social system. It is but natural that he is confronted with the vested interests, represented by the ruling complex and the CPI; he has upset the bee-hives.

The anti-JP propaganda is mounting every day. But it reveals the enormity to which the citadel of the vested interest has shaken and to the extent his critics have stooped. The propaganda has been directed at two levels : one is personal and the other is about the movement in Bihar.

WHO IS LEFTIST ?

Some time ago an English daily published a story about JP. The story was concocted and distorted. It referred to an incident in the early forties when JP was undergoing imprisonment in the Deoli concentration camp. How dreaded had JP become for the British Government is evident from this single incident. A member of the British Parliament had come to India and he came to know about one Narayan who was organising guerilla warfare in the Sunderbans. He informed his Parliament, and the British Government wanted to ascertain the fact whether he was the same Jayaprakash Narayan. Tottenham, the Home Secretary, wrote on his official file : "I know Jayaprakash Narayan, who is still in the Deoli camp. But he is a scoundrel." His apprehension did not come true for he was not the same Narayan. This daily, however, carried this twisted story, for reasons best known to it.

It is held that the movement in Bihar is a fascist movement and an amalgam of left adventurism, communal and parochial forces. The question is who is to decide as to which party is leftist and which is not ? Is the CPI a leftist party ? Is not the CPI a right and revisionist party according to the CPI (M) and the CPI(ML) ? What about Soviet Russia ? Is it not a social fascist or revisionist country according to China ? If the USSR signs a 10-year trade pact with the US of there is super-power detente, it is a progressive development. This myth of leftism is now exploded for it serves only the Establishment and the CPI.

The movement in Bihar is a spontaneous mass upsurge against

economic miseries. The people have tolerated these miseries for centuries. The recent price rise has been the cause of the immediate outburst. But at the root, it is an economic movement *par excellence*.

The price rise is a disease rather than a symptom. Many reasons such as expansion of money supply, cost inflation and the rise in the prices of food grains have been put forward for the rise in prices. Yet, there is very little recognition of the fact that black money is more responsible for the price rise in the country. It is expected that 10 per cent of the GNP goes to the black-moneywallahs and at least 10 per cent of that is going to the coffers of the Congress Party.

THE SUGAR BARONS

The cause-and-effect relation between price rise and black-money is not difficult to deduce from some of the empirical cases. The sugar industry had registered a record production of 4.3 million tonnes is 1972-73. It is now recognised that the production has gone below the target. The reason is not difficult to trace The sugar barons first created scarcity and then demanded their pound of flesh for price rise in return for the money donated to the Congress on the eve of the elections in Uttar Pradesh.

The price rise has a two-fold effect. One, it affects the poor people most and, two, it changes the income distribution in favour of the affluent. The official figures indicate that the rise in the wholesale price index in the last one year is about 30 per cent and if the last two years are taken together, the rise is more than 30 per cent during the last two years. There is no commensurate rise in the wages of the working classes. The wages of the agricultural workers, who form the bulk of the working population in the country, have not risen even more than 20 per cent while the price of rice sold in retail shops has shot up by 70 to 130 per cent. If one adds to it the growth rate of the population, the situation becomes still more gruesome.

The number of landless rural workers has gone up from 11.3 per cent in 1961 to 19.35 per cent in 1971 in UP, from 23 to 38 per cent in Bihar, from 28.6 to 37.4 per cent in Andhra Pradesh, from 18.4 to to 29.1 per cent in Tamil Nadu and from 15.3 to 25.7 per eent in West Bengal. In India, the total number of agricultural

workers has grown from 23.5 million to 31.5 million in 1961 and 45.4 million in 1971. There are two most discernible trends. One, the number of agricultural workers is growing fast and, the other the rate of pauperisation is also rising equally fast. As a result, with the passage of time, more people are undergoing the sense of social deprivation. In the words of the famous sociologist. Daniel Bell, it has created a fast-yawning gulf between the expectation of social change and the real achievement. Millions of the downtrodden in this country are haunted by the revolution of expectations. When they see the reality, they feel frustrated. These factors are bound to create a revolutionary situation. But JP cannot be blamed for it.

There is also a correlation between corruption and the polity of the country. The party in power draws the legitimacy of its government from the fact of being elected at the polls. But if it is the source of legitimacy, the effectiveness of the electoral system in the present social framework is doubtful, for it is characterised by highly stratified caste and class distinctions. There is yet another pertinent question that JP has raised in this connection. The present government is constituted by the minority of votes; it is evident in Uttar Pradesh where the Congress secured only 33 per cent of the votes polled But, it still holds the power. This itself invalidates the concept of legitimacy. But what is more important is the question of money in the elections. The election expenses are shooting up at every successive election. One who commands the money-bag controls the elections. The ruling party depends for its elections on black money and black money in turn pushes up the price. This is a vicious circle of price rise, corruption and elections.

PARASITES AND TOILERS

Yet, there is another important source of corruption which is rooted in the social system, inherited as a legacy from the colonial rule. The present social system is highly stratified with thin layers of social parasities at the top and millions of the toilers masses at the bottom. Such stratification has not very given an impetus to widespread corruption but has also eroded the ethos of economic development.

Legalistic interpretation is not enough to solve human and

social problems; it is sometimes prone to authoritarian system in countries like India. For the legal system is amenable to change; it is not a sationary and flexible concept. But if it fails to incorporate the emerging values, it losses all its meaning and rather prepares the ground for fascist tendencies to grow. But, unfortunately, the Establishment has taken this attitude. It has lost even the perspective of democratic practices and conventions.

The recent railway strike was dubbed as "politically motivated" and the Government let loose its repressive measures on the striking workers. The BSF, CRP, the Territorial Army, MISA and DIR have become the source of its strength. But does not all this undermine the foundation of democracy ? It has become pattern of the establishment in this country.

The Economic and Political Weakly, in an articale "More than Legal Aid" in its issue of April 27, 1974, said that "in Srikakulam district seven out of 11 talukas were notified as 'disturbed areas' in 1969. About 50,000 people are still herded together in Vietnam-type 'strategic hamlets'—the police and para-military have fanned out in the tribal tracts as part of the Government's anti-Naxalite operations." There are many such examples in the list. The Gaya firing on March 11, the shooting on the procession on June 5 at Patna by members of the Indira Brigade and the bomb explosion in the Circuit House in Patna smack of fascist tendencies. What is the role of the Nehru Brigade and the Indira Brigade ? Are they not para-military organisations, patronised by Congress leaders ? What is the difference between the Shiv Sena and the Nehru Brigade ? Is it democratic to keep 30,000 young men in prison for years together ? What was the fault of these young men ? They were fighting for a change in the present tyrancial social system.

Why has the Government faltered in bringing about social change, if it is anxious to make democracy strong ? Who should be blamed for it ? The need for social change has always been stressed by our political leaders during and after the freedom movement.

ECONOMIC SLAVERY

As early as the forties, Acharya Narendra Deva had written : "It would be trite to say that the basic problem of India is poverty.

Yet, that is the profoundest truth of our social life, challenging our utmmost wisdom and resources. The Congress is deeply conscious of this problem and it is out of that consciousness that the idea of economic freedom has grown." He regretted that the Congress had not given any concrete shape to this freedom. As a vague generalisation, he said, it is more than useless, nay, it is dangerous. Ironically, the Congress still holds its ambivalent attitude and has kept the programme of social change in abeyance.

The ruling clique had maintained the old and stagnating system for it has neither the will nor is it a ideologically homogeneous unit to change it. The party in power is divided into various pressure groups and, above all, it serves the ruling elities. But its reluctance has brought the nation almost on the verge of collapse, Scarcity and shortages, famine and hunger stalk the country. What type of society do we wish to build ? A society of millions of povery-stricken people, malnourished children and unemployed youth ? This is what the Congress Party has given to the people of this country gift during 27 long years.

Gandhiji, who understood the problem of this country, also understood the problem of poverty. The problem in this country is not so simple; nor can any economic wizard create prosperity in this country. The malady is deep-rooted and one has to wage a relentless war against the vested interest, a war against an attitude typical of colonial rule, a war against the style of living at present prevailing among the affluent.

Gandhi's programme of satyagraha has much utility in underdeveloped contries. It is not limited either by time or space; it is as much relevant today as it was during British rule. Jayaprakashji has rightly said : "I felt that the gram Swarajya approach was not the right one. The struggle approach is the right one. Gandhi had seen this when he developed struggle with constructive work."

Mao's Cultural Revolution in China is strikingly similar to Gandhi's satyagraha. His revolution was meant against the return of landlord ideas, material profit motivation and conduct embezzlement, corruption and nepotism. While spelling cut the significance of the Cultural Revolution he said : "The exploiting classes have been disarmed but their reactionary ideas remain rooted in their minds We have confiscated their property but one cannot rid their minds of reactionary ideas . . . they invariably try to make use of their influence surviving from the past to shape

public opinion in preparation for the political and economic restoration of capitalism."

POSITIVE ROLE

Mao's cultural Revolution stems from his theory of super-structure. In a Communist country like Russia, the transformation of the structural basis is practicaliy guranteed, if the revolutionary breakthrough once takes place or, after, ıf the power is taken over and private ownership of the means of production is abolished, But, the Russian experience has shown that a capitalist-type super-structure can grow up on a socialist base. The Soviet society is facing today the crisis of disharmony between "the socialist basis" and "the political super-structure". Mao's Cultural Revolution, as Gandhi's satyagraha, has its relevance.

But there is a difference between Mao and Jayaprakashji. Mao launched his movement when he took over power but JP wants to achieve the same objective without trying to come into power. Nevertheless, the imoportance of the mass movement cannot be undermined; it is necessary for countries like India. In India neither the basis nor the super-structure is socialist or democratic. A people's movement like the one led by JP has a definite and positive role to play.

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JP IS POINTING THE WAY

B. VIVEKANANDAN

Four hundred years ago when the world was rolling under the boots of despots, Nicholo Machiavelli advised his *Prince* to keep subjects starving or semi-starving so that they would not rebel against the King. Seldom has this cynical advice of the 16th century philosopher been scrupulously followed in modern times as in India today under the present Government. People from all walks of life are put in a desperate struggle for survival, with little time left at their disposal to keep an eye on the misdeeds of their rulers in New Delhi or other State capitals. Artificial scarcity, galloping prices, inflation and growing unemployment have aggravated their misery further. Five-Year Plans have virtually become irrelevant to the common man. As a result more than 80 per cent of the Indian population are living under sub-human conditions. Poverty is spreading in such a great speed that reports and pouring is not only of starvation deaths but also of several instances where parents are selling their children in the markets to earn a square-meal.

In the political scene, systematic efforts are made in recent years to undermine the democratic framework, embodied in our constitution from within. Authoritarian tendencies are increasingly evident in the day-to-day administration. Fundamental rights are whittled down. DIR and MISA are indiscriminately used against political opponents. Electoral system is vitiated. The necessary infrastructure of stable democracy is gradually destroyed. Freedom

of the press is threatened. Independence of judiciary is threatened. All these developments have made our democratic functioning mockery.

At the moral plane, there is all pervading political and administrative corruption engulfing the entire fabric of our system. The symptoms of this cancer in our body politic could be seen from the estblishment of 'small car' factory. Maruti Ltd., to the son of the Prime Minister downwards. It is estimated that at least 30 per cent of the total outlay of our Five-Year Plans go straight into the pockets of the corrupt ministers, field officers and other Congress bosses from national to village levels. It is of common knowledge that many public policies have been attuned to lure more bribes. Corrupt ministers who raise more fund for the ruling party have greater say in the Government's affairs. Ministers and politicians who keep a liaison with black money holders have effective say over the country's financial policies. They have successfully prevented the government from demonetising the currency, a a step absolutely necessary to kill black money and curb inflation.

People's resentment against this growing gloomy situation was given expression through spontaneous mass agitations in different parts of the country, the first phase of which was ended with the violent student agitation Gujarat and the dissolution of the Gujarat Legislative Assembly. Although the Gujarat student movement failed to achieve its objectives like ending the corruption and bringing down the prices, it had the tremendous impact on the minds of other patriotic elements, who were looking for an effective way to purify the political and administrative system in the country. Certainly, the Gujarat agitation has considerably influenced Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, the greatest living Indian, to give serious thought to lauuching a new nation-wide agitation to bring about vital changes in our system. After feeling disgusted over the serious deterioration in the moral standards of the people in Government, he asked a ponderous question in March this year: "How can a nation without a moral fibre survive ?" He observed that the galloping political corruption and precipitous fall in the moral standards of our public life have degraded the entire gamut of national life—business, public and private administration, the professions, education even customs, manners and personal relations. "If there is dishonesty, corruption, manipulation of the

masses, naked struggle for personal power and personal gain, there can be no socialism, welfarism, government, public order, justice, freedom, national unity—in short, no nation." Further he said that the prevalent confusion, lack of direction and purposefulness, galloping corruption at all levels of politics and government may suit Smt. Indira Gandhi's new style of leadership, but they spell disaster to the future of Indian democracy.

It is true that with the establishment of a personal rule both in the Congress Party and the Government Smt. Gandhi has already stifled the democratic functioning of both the Congress Party and the Government to a considerable extent. As a result, Congress Party machinery, the brute majority in Parliament and the Union Cabinet composed of 'yes' men, are nothing but convenient mechanisms to provide a democratic semblance to her personal rule. In the process, Parliaments effectiveness as a sovereign body also has been considerably eroded, reducing it to a mere talking shop. Deliberation of Parliament has little relevance to her decisions. It may be noted that till 1971, the Prime Minister was afraid of Parliament. But after the mid-term poll she does not bother for it. The cumulative effect is that our democracy has been reduced to a farce in which a powerful coterie stage-manages things in New Delhi. The decision-making is so centralised that everything revolves around the whims and fancies of one individual. Under these circumstances where is the real democratic process in the functioning of the State ? It is the way the 'Westminster model' government is expected to function ?

In the circumstances, JP thinks that two steps are to be taken very urgently to strengthen our demorcratic system and make it meaningful to the common man: (1) Removal of political and administrative corruption; and (2) electoral reforms with power vested in the voters to recall their representative when they find that he has abused his position.

As JP says : "unless corruption is brought under control even the best socio-economic policies will go wrong and no 'ism,' social or any other, can have a chance." Instances accumulated over the past 27 years of uninterrupted Congress rule provide ample proof of the ethical orientation of the Congress Party and its ministers and their attitude towards corruption. It is of common knowledge that countless CBI inquiry reports, like the one in 1965, against Shri Biju Patnaik when he was the Congress Chief Minister of

Orissa then, confirming the corruptions of several leading Congress luminaries have been kept permanently in the cold storage without taking any action. Of late, to avoid such embarrassments of CBI Reports the government sometimes refer corruption charges against important persons to a sham enquiry either of the Prime Minister or of a Committee of Union Ministers and straight away give clearance certificates to the corrupt. The manner in which the serious charges levelled against the Haryana Chief Minister, Shri Bansi Lal, were disposed of recently is a case to the point. The other model of corruption enquiry has been provided by the West Bengal Chief Minister, Shri Siddhartha Shankar Ray, who, after publicly announcing his resolve to fight corruption, is dragging his feet in the matter and tries privately to protect his corrupt colleagues. This explains why he reluctantly referred only five out of the total 130 serious corruption charges he received for enquiry before the Wanchoo Commission, although Shri Wanchoo himself found it necessary to go into charges at least against 10 of Shri Ray's ministerial colleagues. These facts show that the Congress leaders from top to bottom are on the side of the corrupt, and New Delhi is "Gangotri" (source) of corruption, to quote JP himself.

The Congress President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, has recently made an offer to JP to set up a body of three or four Cabinet Ministers to go into the corruption charges against people in government. Admirable. But who are these three or four 'honest' Union Minister whose hands are clean and impartial enough to have the moral stature to look into the corruption of others ? No wonder, JP has ignored the offer with contempt it deserved.

JP thinks that democracy in India is meaningless unless the governmental power is placed under the direct and effective control of the people. In this context he wants that the people should have the power to recall their representative when they find him unworthy of their continued trust. Whether this power would be exercised or not, the very fact that it is included in the statute book itself would work as a powerful deterrent against erring 'representatives.' Now, in the absence of any such post-election control their five-year term as a licence for five years to do whatever they like unmindful of what their contituents want them to do.

Technically speaking people of India are the sovereign masters

of the country. How meaningless it is for a citizen is evident from the fact that this authority is limited to his right to vote once in five years and watch helplessly afterwards all the misdeeds of the rulers till the next election ! It amounts to nothing when a voter is denied even this minimum participation in the democratic process through bogus voting, terror, intimidation or by 'capturing' polling booths. Therefore, in practice, elections in India have become a virtual farce. They are neither free nor fair. As JP rightly asks : how can elections stagemanaged through the process of black money and corrupt practices be considered free and fair ?

As JP says high election expenses and the use of black money for it are the greatest sources of corruption Crores of rupees are collected from unscrupulous elements like hoarders, black marketeers and black money holders and filtered down to the grass-root level to bribe the voters. There is no account for these money transactions anywhere. The collection and spending are done clandestinely. In a poor country like India where 80 per cent of people are living under sub-human conditions the distribution of this tainted money among the voters can have telling effect in corrupting them and influence their decisions. Moreover, the ruling party, by the massive use of black money collected through doubious means, has made the elections so expensive that it has become increasingly difficult for honest people to get elected to various legislatures. The net result is that the legislatures are progressively filled with dubious characters and the honest elements are gradually eliminated from the political scene. This trend itself is dangerous. The other implication af this large scale distribution of black money among voters is that the process imparts adequate training for every Congress worker, from top to bottom, how to give and receive bribes. He would not fight shy to do it when he holds official position also. Thus, is an unimaginable speed the entire Congress machinery has become an in strument of corruption.

These facts underlines that a moral regeneration in politics is absolutely essential. And this can be done only under the leadership of men of JP's calibre. Greately inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and Karl Marx, enriched by the vast experience of the freedom struggle and armed with the unassailable purity in personal and public life JP is the tallest living Indian who has the courage of conviction and moral stature to lead the present movement for the

restoration of norms in politics. Perhaps, he is one of those very few who are gifted with the prophetic imagination to foresee the inevitable march of events. However, the means he has employed to achieve his high objectives are peaceful and democratic and could well be applied on a nationwide scale. Gherao, picketing, dharna, no-tax campaign, boycott of schools and colleges for one year are all perfectly democratic methods of protest employed by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle and to carry them out JP has chosen the students and youth as the vanguard of the movement. This augurs well bccause students and youth are the most dynamic sections of society who has the courage and determination to carry on the struggle against great odds. During the freedom movement they made great sacrifices and braved bullets, repression and imprisonment to carry out the struggle. JP found that their intervention has become necessary now once again to stop the rot in the body politic and give the necessary shake up to guide the Indian democracy to its welfare goals. History shows that with nations great opportunities once lost were seldom ever recaptured. Once the chance has been missed, other paths were inevitably followed and the decisive moment passed More than any one else JP knows this very important lesson of history. He does not want to miss the present ideal situation prevalent in the nation to bring about vital changes in the body politic. Meanwhile. he hopes that the new national movement against corruption would throw up a large number of young leaders who will have abiding interests in maintaining purity in public life. If that comes true, in the hands of this emerging leadership future India will certainly have a better and cleaner administration.

However, the people's movement in Bihar is epoch-making and in this. JP's demand for dissolution of the Bihar Assembly is only a pace-setter of a wider struggle for purity in public life. Time and again JP has made it clear that dissolution of the Assembly in itself would not solve the problems of corruption, rising prices, unemployment, fair distribution of the fruits of progress, etc. But it would be a step forward in the right direction since it would symbolise the people's no confidence in a corrupt administration. Nevertheless, JP's objective in the present people's movement in Bihar seems to be to provide a viable model for the impending nationwide agitation against the evils in politics and administration. This underlines that the success of this peaceful struggle

in Bihar is all the more important for the future of the Indian democratic system.

It is rather irrelevant to ask JP now to spell out the blue print of his future strategy in advance. Perhaps no sensible person would like to do so. JP, particularly, is not the type of person who would like to build castels in the air. But, understandably, he has declared his goal – the establishment of a just and democratic social order, free from exploitation. Also he has declared his immediate objectives—removal of corruption and strengthening the democratic set up in the country. Other programmes and the needed strategy would follow as the movement advances step by step. It is clear that in the wider perspective, his objective to end corruption in Patna is a significant but minor programme. His major programme obviously is to prepare the entire nation for a wider struggle and direct it towards New Delhi, "the Gangotri (source) of corruption." Smt. Gandhi knows this potentiality of the current Bihar agitation. That is why she was quick to comment that it is a fight directed against her.

The Bihar struggle is bound to spread all over the country since every state in India suffers from similar problems. Certainly, days are not far off when the present small stream of popular agitation in Bihar spreads into a nation-wide flood and uproots the corrupt elements from Indian politics and administration. In brief, through the Bihar struggle JP is pointing the way for building a new democratic India, free from corruption, deceit and exploitation. In a sense under JP's leadership the second national liberation movement—liberate the people from the cultches of corruption, injustice and exploitation—has begun.

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J.P.—FROM SOCIALISM TO SARVODAYA

Dayanath Singh

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia's comrade-in-arms, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan enters 71st year of his life this week. On this occasion we print here an article analysing his thoughts —*Editor*

Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, the Sarvodaya leader, was born on October 11, 1902, in the village of Sitabdiar in the district of Saran; Bihar. He was educated in the Patna Science College. He went to the U.S.A. and obtained his Tripos in Social Sciences. While a student in the Patna College, he was attracted towards the non-co-operation movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. He took keen interest in politics even during his student days. During his seven years' stay in the U.S.A. he intensively studied Marxism and was committed to the ideology of Marxian socialism. He came back to India as a confirmed Marxist, but he found himself difficult to adjust with the conservative and liberal elements within the Indian National Congress. He was assigned the labour department of the A.I.C.C.

In 1934, in co-operation with his colleagues like Acharya Narendra Deva, Yusuf Meherally and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, he funded the Socialist Party within the Congress. He led the Party from 1934 to 1952. He rigorously participated in the "Quit India" Movement of 1942 and won heroic fame. In 1952 he decided to join the Bhoodan Movement of Acharya Vinoba Bhave

and thus finally ronounced party politics in 1954. Later he dedicated his life to the Sarvodaya movement and bacame a Jeevandani.

Shri Narayan is still a controversial figure in Indian politics although he has stated several times that he is free from party politics. A dedicated soul, a patriot, a humanist and a fearless spokesman in politics, Shri Narayan never hesitates to speak out what he feels right. His political statements show his depth of imagination, maturity of thought and clarity of vision and analytical approach to the problems facing the country.

AS A MARXIST

It has already been stated that he was influenced by the Marxian ideology during his student days. Later, he studied the writings of European Socialists. His conception of socialism is based on the teachings of St. Simon, Proudhon and Robert Owen. Until 1952, he was a traditional socialist who believed that nationalisation and state ownership of the means of production was the essence of socialism, standing for the elimination of inequalities and exploitation. But after 1950, there was a redical change in his thinking and concept of socialism.

He came to hold that nationalisation of industries was no more than "governmentalisation." He found in it the evils of bureaucracy and stateism. He equated the state socialism of Russia with state capitalism. In a capitalist society, the ownership of the means of production lies in the hands of capitalists while in the socialist society it lies in the bands of the State. There is simply a change of ownership and the relations of the production remain the same.

Shri Narayan advocated decentralisation of political and economic power. The massive concentration of economic-political power in Soviet Russia ultimately degenerated into totalitarianism and therefore Shri Narayan issued a warning to the resurgent Afro-Asian countries to take lessons from the above experiment.

There was a major shift in the policies of Shri Narayan in 1952 after the first general elections. He wrote an article in a journal "Freedom First" published from Bombay wherein he repudiated the doctorine of Marxism. He maintained that Marxism as a social philosophy was outdated and, as such, it

could no longer provide the necessary impatous to the reconstruction of man and society. He then advocated the philosophy of Sarvodaya, essentially based on the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.

In 1953, thus attracted towards the Gandhian philosophy, he joined the Bhoodan movement led by Acharya Vinoba Bhave He realised the tremendous impact of the social philosophy of the Mahatma based on non-violence, change of heart by persuasion and the purity of means for the attainment of ends. He wrote his famous booklet "From Socialism to Sarvodaya" wherein he stated the reasons for his preference of Sarvodaya to socialism.

According to Shri Narayan socialism as a social philosophy does not deal with all the aspects of human life and as such it is not a total philosophy. On the other hand, Sarvodaya represents all the varied aspects of human life and is as such a complete philosophy (*Samagra Darshan*) within itself. Further, socialism divides society into two antagonistic classes, the haves and the have-nots, and thus encourages intensification of hatred, while Sarvodaya aims at class collaboration and co-operation. Sarvodaya stands for the good of all whereas socialism stands for the salvation of one class of people at the cost of another class. Sarvodaya, therefore, is the extension of the doctrine of socialism which, because its limited form, cannot cope up with the dynamics of social forces.

PARTYLESS DEMOCRACY

Shri Narayan, in his thought-provoking pamphlet, entitled "A Plea of Reconstruction of Indian Polity," advocated the establishment of "partyless democracy." It created a lot of theoretical apprehensions in the minds of the authors, intellectuals and politicians of the country and they expressed doubts about the success of such a system. He maintained that the party-based democracy was harmful for the country. A non-party democratic structure alone could truly lay the foundations of *Grama Swarajya.*

In the existing system of representative democracy, the choice of an individual is restricted in the selection of the candidates. The will of the party is imposed on the voter and he is asked to cast his vote for a candidate selected by the party. It kills the

initiative of the individual and prevents him from enjoying the essence of freedom. The present system of parliamentary democracy is limited in scope and as such it is not a participating democracy. So there is need for further extension and orientation of the present system.

POLITICS OF CONSENSUS

Shri Narayan is not only a social worker but he is a thought-provoking theoretician too. At times, through his casual statements, he springs a surprise by coining new phrases, and catchwords. (Recently he has advocated the politics of consensus. According to him, in the present system of democracy, decisions are taken by the majority by supressing the opinion of minority. A decision is taken in the legislature, say, if 51 votes are in favour and 49 votes against. Such a system, according to Shri Narayan, is the negation of democracy. If the implied meaning of democracy is *Purna Swarajya*, then the decisions should be taken by near-unanimity.

Shri Narayan also advocates that all the decisions at the national level should be taken on the basis of a broad consensus. The present system of *Rajniti* should be replaced by *Lokniti* Sarvodaya, therefore, envisages a people-oriented polity in place of the government-oriented one.

SURRENDER OF DACOITS

The latest example of the vindication of the Gandian principles and Sarvodaya is the change of heart of hundreds of dacoits in the Chambal valley through gentle persuasion. The recent surrender of docoits in hundreds has captured the imagination of the entire country and has once again proved the efficacy of the weapon of non-violence.

Under the inspiring leadership of Shri Narayan, a new era has dawned in the Chambal valley. The bandits of yesterday have pledged to dedicate the rest of their lives to the Sarvodaya movement. In the Chambal valley, Shri Narayan has translated his concept of reconstruction of man and society into a living reality.

Shri Narayan is not only a visionary or utopian but he is also a practical man (Karma Yogi) like his spiritual Guru Mahatma

Gandhi He is determined to find a permanent solution to the problem of dacoits in a bid to eliminate the very "institution" of dacoity. India and the rest of the world are curiously watching his dynamic experiments in the Chambal valley and his endeavour reconstructing man and society. The voluntary surrender of the dacoits under the authority of law and order on a massive scale have no parallel in world history

The hero of the "Quit India" Movement completes 70 milestones in his life's journey on October 11, 1972. He has fought many a battle in life and still cherishes the desire to fight the battles against poverty, hunger, exploitation and inequality. A social visionary, a harbinger of new ideas, an apostle of peace and non-violence, he is determined to complete the mission of his life.

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THE PRINCE SAVIOUR OF DEMOCRACY

BRIJ MOHAN TOOFAN

The Indian version of Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* will no doubt find Hamlet alive at the end and ruling over Denmark. Lashed by terrible inner conflicts for two decades, there he appears on the stage as the prince of the peasants with eyes wild with blunt decisiveness. Our Hamlet, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, after pushing aside many an ideological stumbling block, is finally locked in combat with the most vicious and corrupt clique of rulers. The struggle JP has launched will undoubtedly be met with repression, denials and brutalities, maybe even death, and yet he is walking the passage, beset with dangerous pitfalls and infested with lunatic outlaws with dignity and courage. Who will now prophesy doom for our Hamlet who has not only sought revolution but has proved incapable of accepting doom at the hands of his friends or adversaries ? Challenged to produce an alternative to the developing chaos caused by single-party authoritarianism, there he comes with surprising vitality, carrying the banner of functional democracy in one hand and the sword of morality in the other. Mercilessly and faithfully he is slashing the throats of catastrophes threatening Bihar, nay India.

The movement JP has launched has just completed 100 days and he has become the target of hysterical attacks from many directions. Anyone with any vested interest finds it difficult to restrain himself and strange howlings from political to academic circles are let loose to condemn JP and his rebelliousness. The

Prime Minister hurled abuses, hounds snarled and mimicked, the Reds of Moscow parentage discovered an Indian fascist and the bureaucratic elite, the real suckers, considered JP as an unfit person to achieve anything constructive. First the entire AICC session and now the five-day meeting of the General Concil of the CPI got exhausted in abusing, cursing, denouncing and denigrating JP and his revolutionary potential.

VITAL ISSUES

One could understand the abusive flair of the Congressmen because of their faith in their being authoritarian in a country where the loot is scheduled according to socialist dreams and tenets. One could as well understand the revulsions from the remains of Communist disillusionment so systematically being buried by the heart-sick CPI for whom democracy was never crucial for testing the socialistic pulse of the country ! But one does wonder about the audacity of all those ranging between *Blitz* and *Young Indian* who desire a compromised retreat on the part of both JP and the Prime Minister, and then a warm embrace without any plan, proposal or programme. What a way to assault the sensibilities of the people they cannot overcome ! They forget that it is not JP and the Prime Minister who matter but the politics of the crooks, handed over to the Congress Party by the sly British, is now being challenged by those who are learning to manage their own destinies. The confrontation, I hope, is final. But what are the issues involved ?

The Prime Minister and her party have inherited a system in which the people's capacity for self-direction has completely been dried up. The Congress calls it the parliamentary system while JP—considering it the game of the corrupt elite to remain in power—desires to tear down the obstacles to honest voting and would like to call the new game a kind of participatory democracy.

For the Prime Minister and her national and international supporters, the strategy of social change must be an imported one imposed from the top. For JP now, the whole scene must change. prompted by the conclusion that free and fair election in the present set up of black money is an impossibility, JP challenges the legitimacy of the Establishment organised by anti-poor administrators.

The Prime Minister and the system are, in fact, one and are inherently and inevitably hostile to people's participation in bringing in some great transformation. The system sucks in the promising ones with token success to their credit. This prompted the elected representatives to cross floor without giving a damn to the comrades they deserted or the principle they betrayed. JP, sick of bringing in gradual reforms through gentle persuasion, wishes to build up parallel institutions based on the intiation of the millions into the experience of self-government.

The present system, through the Constitution and legal conventional politics, has thrived on the helplessness of the voter who is not permitted to be organised, and the limit he can touch is again the conventional coalition polities which shirks all structural changes. This system is headed by the Prime Minister. Her admirers, watching the shadows growing, ask for a summit between the two. And this is precisely what JP will have to reject without a second consideration. JP considers the present model of voting a snare and a delusion and is out to practise the functional or participatory democracy which includes feeding and clothing the teeming millions besides their full involvement and stimulation. Involvement of the millions is on and this has frightened the elite; millions are being stimulated with the idea of a better future and this has annoyed the Establisment; thousands upon thousands would march to prison and this wouid shake the system. And what remains of the regime? A tiny little Ghafoor facing a Titan.

REVOLUTION ON THE MARCH

JP has no arisen like a phoenix out of deadly flames only to frighten the corrupt, society's sickness, but has emerged as a catalyst demanding an environment which will help the rustic, the unemployed, to take a decision about their needs. The Prime Minister and her palace guards, depending on the prescriptions written by alienated radicals, declared this call for parallel systems as reactionary and fascist. And all those who are willing to die with the faith stuck in their throats that one day the State would wither away, cursed the utopian partyless democracy. This ultimate dream of JP is not so ultimate. The touch of his little finger destroyed the establishment of the established parties; given

a few more months, the insurrectionary mood of the people will capture and transform even the rigid and the authoritarian. A little more pressure and the upsurge will democratise the 'distribution of money' system as well. And then the ultra radicals seeking a left alternative would be watching the march of a revolution from the high balconies of their centralised offices.

The people's movement in Bihar is also being attacked by those who are with JP and yet want the underlying vision to be further articulated. These are the real problem men of politics. They go with a mass movement and yet refuse to abide by its logic. They join a direct action but when such action bursts at the seams, they start seeking clarification of the purpose of the movement and innovate their own mechanism to obtain a place on the platform. Poor souls, many of them are asking JP to clarify his aims after the Assembly is dissolved. They want to remain the surviving human beings amidst a dehumanised but parliamentary society. They do not appreciate an era of transition. Their analysis of the situation being ambiguous, they remain assailable.

The thought of revolution is rather a complex one and requires an intellectual development to understand its irrationalities. A parliamentary mind often becomes sterile and barren as far as the revolutionary urges are concerned And when JP calls upon the younger people to create their own terms of action, a party like CPI(M) declines to participate in it "since there is a danger of the movement being utilised by right reactionary elements" (*Peoples' Democracy*, July 21, 1974). I am afraid even the CPI(M), having carried along with it all the old disputes and Marxian obscurantiscism, had failed to form an attitude. Its analysis of the situation may be legitimate or distorted but it ought to have given candid and sustained support for the one who, unlike it, has something indigenous and tangible to offer other than the rat race for power which the CPI(M) has lost for good.

THE SAVING OF DEMOCRACY

The critics of JP do not understand the nature of things to come and if they do and still ask impertinent and awkward questions, they are real smugs. If JP, the leader of the oppositionist movement in Bihar, also leads the movement in the rest of the country, then democracy with parties or without parties would remain safe. What is JP doing after all ? He is demolishing a part

of the present structure. He is providing teeth to the constitutionally sanctioned voice of dissent; he is articulating the Opposition which was in the doldrums for long; and finally he is engineering commotion and turbulence amounting to revolution. Any revolution brought about by the spontaneous will of the people and not directed by politburos of this brand or that and which demands a responsible government generates democracy from the grass-roots.

JP's efforts to prepare the people to fire their representatives is merely to institutionalise their quality of judgment which the ruling clique in Bihar had usurped through rigged elections and what a price he is paying ! And what a price the government of the day would pay if it does not account for the ills it inflicted on society in the past 27 years

JP is saving democracy by not demolishing the house of cards built jointly by the Congress and the CPI and cemented by Delhi and the Super-Power Axis but by creating hordes of new and young politicians who would jump in the moment the present thugs-*cum*-commissars are dismissed by the verdict of the people.

A leader of JP's stature or even lesser ones hardly has any need to suffer or go to prison because in democracy a viable Opposition is always permitted to speak out against the misdeeds of the Government. But not in Bihar. Thousands of persons going to prison is a telling indictment of the present Government.

The party system which proclaims that democracy is functioning has been subverted by the ruling junkers to an extent that all methods which define democracy have been misused. The Opposition parties may not win the elections for a long time in any given democracy but when dubious means are adopted by the ruling party to manipulate successful vast number of citizens, then democracy smells totalitarianism and it must be destroyed.

Another factor which provides the proof of sound democracy is to seek popular support without being molested or loss of life, i.e., constitutionally sanctioned opposition will not dread a nightmare during elections. But how do they capture the booths ? How the polling gets over in half an hour ? How do the Presiding Officers hand over the ballot papers to the parties concerned ? When there are no repressive consequences attendant upon the failure in any election, then why this show of illegal, immoral, unconstitutional and undemocratic methods and moods to win any election ? JP's movement will turn the tables on such hijackers of

democratic norms who always remained insensitive not only to just demands for social change but derided the cry for free and fair expression.

WILL JP SUCCEED ?

The present-day government, fully armed with modern weapons and a huge army of loyal servants and soldiers, can easily overawe a situation plagued with senseless violence or even sensible non-violence. The government, with its vast machinery and resources to propagate lies about any given situation, can frustrate the well-intentioned plans of a man with a will. If death or major repression is the motive of any given government these days, it can be achieved and the world will not bat any eyelash; much less our elite or the intellectuals stored in the ivory towers of the system. If along with the list of legitimate grievances grows the political repression, the effectiveness of the revolutionary call can be curbed, especially when each establishment can call to its assistance the batons of other establishments.

This being the case and knowing the nature of the docility prevalent in our society, I must confess JP will find it hard to achieve "the distant and incomprehensible ideals of social change." No one can deliver the goods in the Indian context with a magic wand, and JP wants a total change and a total reconstruction of the political and the social system. They will "kill" JP as Caesar was killed and there is no Mark Antony to revenge his loss barring the general anguish which may cry for the blood of some petty fry.

But JP wants a peaceful revolution, thus not giving a chance to the trigger-happy intriguers to finish him that easily. He is no Caesar either, though he was offered the throne thrice which, according to him, he refused. By challenging the system, JP has challenged the Prime Minister who, according to JP, is "vindictive, ruthless and dictatorial." JP calls the Prime Minister his daughter but the arrogant daughter has no need for a god father. The Prime Minister has so far failed to break or frighten JP who is growing in size and energy every day. The middlemen sent to persuade JP to abandon his mad designs have all come-back empty-handed. The senior ones, meant to arrange a summit between the two, are now summoned. JP's opportunities and limitations are immense. Many an honest man has fallen among the jagged path seeking a

rapprochement or a detente with the Prime Minister as she is vindictive and ruthless according to JP, and JP is an honest man. He is not crooked like many fallen honest men of right and left.

The confrontation between JP, with his force of ideas elaborated with passion but wrapped in reason, and the Prime Minister, known for her strivings for power, is final. There can be no peace for either of them unless their respective requirements are met. The accidental occurrences apart, there is not going to be an easy victory for either of them.

If JP goes down fighting, the passion for equality, change and democracy will continue to grow even after he is gone. If the Prime Minister loses, the internal manoeuvrings and external impositions would vanish for a long time to come. But this is only when one of them loses outright. What if one of them wins ? Well, with the victory of JP democracy would survive and violence and corruption will not dehumanise society further. In case the Prime Minister gets the last laugh, no grievance would ever be corrected and the regime will become the extension of its gun.

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JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN AND HIS REVOLUTION

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Revolution is the master theme in the history of the present age. The comprehensive problem of revolution embraces three parts or phases : (1) the objective prerequisite conditions, (2) the elite or vanguard, and (3) the actual staging of the revolution. It is part of the same three-fold system that political power, political will and political consciousness have to be explicitly introduced. While the objective conditions lie in the mode of production of class relationships without which there could neither be a revolutionary condition nor a revolutionary consciousness, a theory or revolution needs a class, or a group of classes critical in numbers, their unity, self-consciousness, political maturity and above all the moral superiority of their leaders to usher in new revolution.

Neither quantitatively nor qualitatively have we had that revolutionary class. The Chinese were more or less in the same position but charted an entirely new and unprecedented course for themselves, which first earned frosty disapproval of the Soviets and then evoked their hostility and hatred. The dehumanization and brutality of all communist regimes have been so pronounced that they have ceased to be revolutionary models for many a people. There enters Gandhi : his main theme was that a revolution respecting human life must be peaceful or nonviolent in most,

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though not necessarily all, of its manifestations. Now given non-violence as will as several overlapping models of production, a revolution becomes a multiclass phenomenon (of course, separating its in-class from its out-class), evolves new forms of resistance and struggle, and above all provides an entirely new basis for the growth and distribution of power. In one crucial respect the Gandhian revolution can be distinguished from all communist revolutions : the latter leaves the question of the distribution of political power undefined while the former does not. If Stalin was the worst distator next to Hitler, it was because the Bolsheviks failed to see this kind of distinction.

A revolution, whether successful or abortive, begins as a protest movement by some section of the society against one or the other prevailing injustice. It is too late to call JP's movement a mere sectional protest movement and too early yet to call it a revolution, There is no doubt though that of all the movements and agitations that came after 1947, JP's is the only one which has the potential of a completely indigenous revolution.

Indeed, JP has emerged as the symbol and expression of the revolutionary conscience of the nation. The old guard of the national movement who assumed power in 1947, betrayed this nation and its revolutionry destiny. Indira Gandhi seemed, in 1969, to be picking up old threads, but she too proved to be anything but revolutionary In effect her lasting contribution is the embourgeoisement of the Indian left. JP as the sole surviving leader of the pre-1947, era has restarted the old struggle again. There is nothing very extraordinary about him yet. But even those who once described him as woolly-headed, confused and living in the wilderness have found him to be a man of great external simplicity and internal subtlety Whether he will succeed or not is impossible to predict. Revolutions are not made to order.

JP's movement has achieved a success which contrasts with the failure of other movement of last two or three years. For example, the Gujarat agitation was far more violent and intense and even succeeded in achieving its political objective, but it failed because it has no roots in the masses nor did it have any arger socio-economic objective. The Naxalites who a few years ago seemed to pose a big threat to the ruling classes were also crushed, though for a different reason. They may have had some kind of a socio-

economic programme, but it was all in Marxist abstractions and their political methods were terroristic rather than revolutionary. Even their so-called revolutionary programme was no more than the parroting of Marxian dogmas. The Andhra agitation was most parochial and turned out to be a very deceitful operation of one faction of an elite against another. There have numerous students' agitations, food riots and trade union struggles, but none of them was broad enough to encompass the participation of the masses on a durable basis.

In practice, revolution primarily means simultaneity of struggle and change. Both these elements are present in JP's movement. though currently the emphasis is more on struggle than on change. The strident question of lazy Indian intellectuals, who have lived over the years on the crumbs of the power elite and borrowed ideologies, as to what JP's revolution is all about or what its socio-economic content is, has been sharply and correctly answered by JP : namely, that every revolution produces its own blueprints as it goes along.

A very crucial and somewhat under-noticed aspect of JP's movement is that it originated from and first spread over to India's heartland, the Hindi, speaking areas. All other serious agitations, narrowly or broadly conceived, originated and were confined to the non-Hindi states on the geographical periphery, leaving untouched the Hindi heartland. It was partly because of this particular localization of these agitations that they could never blossom into something bigger Only an agitation from the heartland can have the natural force to do so. That is one reason why JP's movement is the first ever to get nation-wide suppoit. Of course, there are other reasons too, but one must never ignore this factor, because the prime-ministerial post and power have somehow come to rest on a person who commands the big support of the Hindi region.

More revolutions in history have exhausted or consumed themselves not because of lack of socio-economic blueprints but because they did not have a definite political viewpoint and programme. Indeed, every revolution has chiliastic hopes which are given the name of socio-economic objectives or blueprints. The beginning and end of every revolution is characteristically political, in the sense that it begins with a political crisis and ends with a political settlement. It is, of course, assumed that profound social and economic changes of the absence of them would in turn create

their own political crisis and new changes would follow the politlcal settlement.

We shall discuss later the genesis and significance of JP's political demads, but it must be stressed here that the dissolution of the Bihar assembly, the focus on political corruption, the demands for introducting electoral reforms, the call for an end to fascist regimes in West Bengal and Haryana, etc. are short-term political demands which are relevant to the current situation. It is on the success of the struggle for these political demands that the next phase of the revolution depends.

The political expression of a revolution has another aspect. In the early stages it may have the same classes and forces on both sides and thus blur the main course of the revolution. Although the masses are fast moving over of JP, one can still see that there are political and social elements which are common to the Congress-CPI alliance and the political support struggle of JP. Indira Gandhi's view of JP as a mere epi-phenomenon or a shadow or puppet controlled by sinister forces is a typical attitude of establishment reaction against the rising forces of revolution. Each day's new scandal that exposes the ruling party and the government confirms the absurdity of this caricature. Almost all the forces of fascism, such as big business, black money, bureaucratic power, secret police, etc are lined up against JP's movement and on the side of the Congress-CPI alliance. Indian fascism, one may safely predict, will have a radical face, as is the case in many other countries of the third world.

It is not a revolutionary practice completely to separate politics or political struggle from socio-economic reforms or changes. Political activity and socio-economic changes mutually reinforce each other to hasten the revolutionary process and produce the right kind of change. JP has mentioned some socio-economic programmes, but they do not add up to any coherent schemes. They are merely an agglomeration of suggested changes. This may be so because JP is not clear about the structure of the politics of his movement. It is a developing situation and a growing movement. All he seems to know at this stage is how to enlarge, deepen and give meaning to the Bihar struggle in terms of all its requirements, however loosely defined they may be. In his view, revolution, apart from being a kind of power struggle, is also designed for the 'removal of corruption

from other fields of social life, such as business (black-marketing, hoarding, etc.), and—most important of all—for basic social, economic, cultural and educational changes. Thus, the struggle in Bihar is not just a flash in the pan but a continuing progression of revolutionary changes. That is why I call it a struggle for total revolution. In this revolutionary process, governments and parties will certainly play a role but the main moving force will be the direct action, of the youth and the people. This action in order to succeed in its objectives, has to be peaceful and also constructive while being combative.'

Over the past several months, the small agitation which was started by the students of Patna for their limited demand has not only burgeoned into a mass movement with specific political demands, such as the dissolution of the Bihar assembly, but has spread like wild fire throughout Bihar and to a limited extent all over the country. The movement has yet no definite shape in other states but it has developed into a massive political and economic struggle in Bihar. Along with political demands, JP has asked for changes in the socio-economic order, in the administrative, electoral and economie systems. It is true that all these changes do not add up to clear-cut alternative model, but they do provide enough objectives and targets for the movement. However, no state movement can hope to make a significant dent on the nation without spreading elsewhere, and that is probably why JP is making efforts to involve as many people and parties outside Bihar as possible.

So far as Bihar alone is concerned, JP has placed the focus on various kinds of reforms. It is one of the most backward of states and in which reforms introduced elsewhere have not been adopted. The three most outstanding areas of reform on which the movement is increasingly focussing attention are education land tenure and public administration. It is not surprising that the vested interests and power elite who control and wield power through these very channels are pitted against him. Some of course are taking cover under JP's umbrella for limited political objectives, but sooner or later the conflict between their political and economic interests and those of the movement will cause them to leave the movement. It cannot be ruled out that they may also try to control or wreck the movement.

In the Bihar movement, JP has done his best to clarify the

position with respect to political polarization, the power struggle, instruments of change, and political demands. These may or may not add up to a revolution, certainly not a socialist revolution, but they do contain some known ingredients of a Gandhian revolution. In his own words : 'Bihar and Gujarat are not movements started by and confined to the combined violence and strength of the opposition parties. . . What you see happening in Bihar is a struggle between chhatra shakti (students' power) and jana shakti (people's power) on the one hand and raj shakti (state power) on the other. And the struggle is not for the capture of power, i.e. for replacing the Congress government with the opposition, but for the purification of fashioning instruments and conditions for taming and controlling power, irrespective of which party or parties happen to be in power for the time being.' This is a clear enough statement about the political side of his revolution. As suggested earlier, all revolutions must have political demands and process of struggle and change.

It is curious that Indira Gandhi should accuse JP of wanting to destroy democracy and at the same time also complain that the opposition wants to remove her and her party from power. In a democracy, it is the duty of the opposition to remove the incumbent ruler from power. The fact of the matter is that the whole order on which the ruling party's and elite's power rests is collapsing not because JP or somebody else is pushing it down but because of its inherent rottenness.

But frankly neither JP nor the opposition taken as a whole has any such programme of removing Indira Gandhi from power. Their political demands relate either to Bihar, where it is definitely the objective to remove the Congress from power, or to the country as a whole, for rooting out corruption, defending democratic norms against the brutal use of state power, electoral reforms and clean government. So long as the movement's political objective of changing the government is limited to Bihar, Indira Gandhi does not have to worry. But in the meantime, she must improve her performance and recreate confidence in herself. Otherwise, as the movement moves into a national revolutionary situation, no one will remain a sacred cow. In fact, if Indira Gandhi is serious about having a place in history, she should join JP in creating a two-front revolution : JP from the gross-roots and Indira from the top. The choice is entirely hers,

JP's relations with the opposition are a subject of considerable controversy. The ruling party, not unnaturally perhaps, has only one plank of attack on JP, namely, that the opposition parties supporting him are not and cannot be revolutionary by any standards. But it has no business to talk about revolution when it is the biggest creator and defender of *status quo* monopoly capitalism. Nevertheless JP cannot avoid answering the question for himself. It is also true that without the support of the opposition parties, who have had their own motives in joining him, he could not have taken the movement forward. The answer is rather simple. So long as the movement's main demands are political, there need not be any conflict between its objectives and the opposition's motives It is only when the movement enters its next phase that JP will face the challenge of both the government and some of the opposition parties. Some parties now with him will then sureiy leave him and join the government, but others remaining with him will inevitably get transformed.

Indeed, JP's movement has already had a traumatic effect on the opposition parties. Most of them began supporting him out of sheer frustration or helplessness, but they soon found that could trigger off an agitation from which they could benefit and get strengthened. JP did raise the prestige of the opposition parties but in the process he has so divided them that only the genuine elements are left in each party. Here there is a peculiar paradox. On the one hand, he radicalized and activized all the opposition parties; on the other, he reduced the strength of each party taken by itself. This is a case of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. In one sense, he has practically eliminated several opposition parties in Bihar. Even the Jana Sangh, the most monolithic party, has not escaped his impact. But it is a curious effect. As a party, the Jana Sangh has changed from being ideologically conservative to being unideologically radical.

At this stage there can be no question of JP's accepting or throwing an electoral challenge to Indira Gandhi at the national level. However, much the opposition parties may keep pressing him in this direction, the objectives of his revolution, if it is to be a real revolution, would seem to suggest a total rejection of such a challenge. The need for transforming the movement from a purely political one to a socio-political one, enlarging its national scope, evolving revolutionary techniques, etc. makes it absolutely

necessary for him to reject some of the right-wing and reformist parties. He is conscious of this problem, and at the meeting of opposition party leaders held in Delhi in November 1974, he rebuked them for asking him to lead their struggle.

JP has accepted Indira Gandhi's electoral challenge only in Bihar, and that when she forced him to do so. His support to and from the opposition parties is also in the context of the Bihar movement. However, no confrontation of this kind can leave the government in Delhi outside the scope of the struggle, because the illegitimate structure in Bihar is being defended by the former.

JP has talked so much about a non-party system that it has been confused with and mistakenly made coterminous with non-politics. His own public career of last 25 years has been dominated by reformist rather than revolutionary activity. Now that he has chosen the path of confrontation, between people's power and state power, there need be no more confusion about the role of politics ! The most important Gandhian element in his movement is the people's politics and institutions will control power. This is the nearest one can get to some kind of participatory democracy, about which Gandhi was quite clear and from which the representative democracies of Europe are struggling to save democracy itself. Be that as it may, there is no difficulty in understanding the simple fact that JP's revolution is yet political in a situation which is revolutionary in every respect.

There is ho arbitrary starting point for revolution nor does it come like a thunderclap out of a clear sky. It has to be preceded by years of disorganization, by series of revolts and mutinies, however, shortlived, and above all by infinitely more profound and for-reaching underlying changes. If JP's movement has spread like wild fire, this too was not an arbitrary happening or an unexpected thunderclap as it appeared to be. That is probably why it started in Bihar, which has remained for decades under conditions of gross mismangement, extremely low development and acute poverty. Even if it is crushed by the use of massive state power, another one is bound to come up because the underlying situation is highly revolutionary. This also explains the widespread response JP has had elsewhere in the country. After all, over the past decade economic development has slowed down, corruption has become rampant and administration has faltered all along the

line. True though all this is, it still falls short of a full explanation.

The Indian power elite had promised in 1947, and kept on repeating the promise, that it would bring about a revolution from above and, therefore, there was no need for having one from below. All that was actually done was the introduction of a few reforms which did not add up to a structural change in the socio-economic system. There was also no fundamental change—as indeed there could not be—in the political power structure either. Since India started from a very low level of economic activity and much stagnation the apparent strides in economic development, particularly industrial development, seemed to create the impression that India was passing through a phase of major transformtion, an industrial revolution. A kind of bloodless revolution seemed to taking place. This was all phoney. What really happened was that with the help of foreign aid, socialist slogans and welfarism, the power elite attempted to adjust its power to the compulsions of bourgeois-landlord economic development and falsely called it a revolution from the top. Naturally the experiment turned out to be shortlived and the power elite found itself caught in its own contradictions. In the year 1975, one thing is quite clear : there can be no revolution from the top any more unless it is backed by a revolution from below. No matter who rules this country, no amount of reforms can now redeem the old system as it has outlived its utility and stands repudiated in the eyes of the people.

The Indian society has reached that point of deadlock at which either it keeps sliding down the path of stagnation, corruption, disorgnization and dysfunctionalism, ultimately leading to some kind of fascist dictatorship; or it produces a revolution from below, no matter wherefrom the impulse of that revolution comes No matter what its present structure and composition JP's is the first movement to have created the potential of such a revolution from below. Whether it will succeed or prove abortive remains to be seen and depends upon relevant changes being forced into the political power structure and upon JP's making the government bend down to accept the political demands first.

The experience of the 1960s all over the world showed that a large section of the organized working class can be anti-revolutionary. The 1968, events of Paris remain a constant reminder of that reality. Countries in which what Engels called labour aristocracy

got associated with the ruling class, the so-called proletarian revolution got pushed behind. In most developing countries there has been a strange alliance between workers and capitalists to appropriate disproportionately large share of the economic surplus and thus produce a crisis situation and stunted growth. That is why in all third-world countries, the revolutionary role of the peesantry has come to be fully recognized. Whereas the first phase of JP's movement largely depended upon the youth and the lower middle classes of the urban areas it has now entered the phase of creating a new alliance between the urban youth and the peasantary. Whethery such an alliance will prove stable and solid also remains to be seen. But one thing is quite certain : if the agitation spreads to the Bihar villages, a more profound condition for a revolutionary movement will have been created. Economic class polarization in Bihar villages remains the sharpest in the country. It has to be given a political shape and the test of JP's revolution will depend upon the fusing of the two polarization.

Looked at from the Marxist or any other viewpoint, the character and structure of the present ruling elite suggests that it transitional and insecure. Whether it is bourgeois, landlord-bourgeois comprador-bourgeois or any other, the Marxists can keep arguing about it to the hind leg of a donkey. But what seems obvious is that the ruling class has lost its governing functions. Its corrution has become inconsistent with even the minimum efficiency of the system and all that is left in the naked coercive power of the state. If it has already not lost its legitimacy it is losing it very fast. At the top things are moving too slow and at the bottom they are moving too fast to create conditions of stability for the rulers. Indira Gandhi's pomised reforms do not and cannot go far enough to check the revolutionary ferment. That is why JP's revolution is yet confined to an amorphous confrontation between the government and practically all others.

In view of the massiveness of the state's coercive power and its strong proclivity to use it ruthlessly against the masses, an alternative and countervailing power base at the bottom becomes essential. If JP merely wants to reform the system or create new rules of the game for the same system and then face an unscrupulous power eilte believing in no rules except naked power, he is unlikely to succeed. The Indian society is not yet totally polarized and it is its powerful middle class which provides support for the ideas

and institutions of liberal democracy as well as leadership for the forces of any revolutionary change. Therefore, the success of JP's movement depends upon avoiding a total confrontation with this class until such time as the revolutionary movements spread all over the country. The middle class is on both sides. JP has to develop a multiple strategy involving reforms, insistence on the rules of the game, upholding of liberal principles, etc. which appeal to the middle class, as well as create an alternative power base at the bottom in the shape of panchayats, samitis and other local bodies. The alternative people's power centres will have many vertical, horizontal, professional occupational and other organizations. In other words, the success of the movement will depend upon the success of what has come to be known in revolutionary language as 'dual power'.

Many of the opposition parties which have offered support to JP are unlikely to support the thesis of dual power as they still operate within the framework of the existing system and draw their sustenance from the classes which are unsympathetic to the main programme of his social revolution. They have rallied round JP in the hope that he will create an alternative political platform or party on which they can jump and force JP to lead them into a great electoral battle with Indira Gandhi. Fortunately, JP knows that is a game which would defeat the very purpose of his revolution. Not that the elections have not to be fought or that have to be completely boycotted. To rely on electoral strategy alone would mean operating within the system almost entirely even if some extra-constitutional politics goes with it. This is to accept the rules of the game. What is important is that at one place it may be necessary to join the electoral battle and at another it may be necessary to destroy altogether the legitimacy of the same electoral process because it is corrupt and controlled by sinister forces. Therefore, JP cannot create a political alternative to the Congress party in the form of a combination of the existing political parties of the opposition. To do so would be self-defeating. Of course a political alternative to the Congress has to emerge, but for that the pre-condition is that the structure of the opposition parties must undergo a relevant change.

JP has already categorically stated that it is the Gandhian frame within which the struggle has to be conducted. This means that his revolutionary process is fundamentally related to

power not simply in the sense of being an end-product but also very much as an instrument of service and bring about fundamental changes in the polity, social structure, economic system, etc. In this context, it must be stated that he has more than once asserted that his movement is to remain non-violent and peaceful. Sometimes a distinction is drawn between what is peaceful and what is non-violent and such a distinction may have relevance for a Sarvodaya worker for whom all power is anathema, but for everybody else the distinction has little significance.

The concept of a total revolution is relvant in the Gandhian framework because not only does it refuse to draw a distinction between ends and means, i e. that ends and means must be of the same genre, or emphasize the politico-economic aspects which every revolution is imbued with, but it also insists upon the institutionalization of the distribution of power in favour of the people. One thing is quite obvious to the Indian people, namely, that anybody talking of a revolution without insisting on and practising a moral revolution is likely to end up as a counter-revolutionary. Today our people do not trust anyone without a moral bearing that is consistent with his professions. This is strictly Gandhian. No other revolution in the world has insisted on such a consistency.

Whether one looks for contradictions, weaknesses or gaps, they can all be easily located in JP's movement. Some of them were inevitable as the history of any revolutionary process would show. Indeed the success of the next phase of the movement will depend upon how far these weaknesses are removed. JP did not start the movement, certainly not the revolution. He has specifically stated many times that the movement was started by students for a limited set of demands, to which the government responded by turning a blind eye and using repression against them. All that JP did was that he led a silent procession of 1200 people on April 8, 1974 to support the student's demand. It is interesting to note that all political parties were asked not to participate in that procession. Therefore, JP's entry into the fray was not the beginning of a revolution of any kind. Revolutions are not always begun by revolutionaries; the start may come from those who are sitting on the fence or are at least not clear about what they want.

Like many previous movement, JP's could also breed illusions,

have its miscarriages and even fail. Yet it is the first movement which has the promise of leaving behind a permanent dent on the Indian political system. At present, both its strength and weakness lie in the fact that it is little more than the romantic moral radicalism of a middle-class revolution. It has the support of political parties which have themselves middle-class support and political objectives which are not yet of very great concern to the masses. However, as the movement's potency gets intensified and new groups and classes come into supplement or replace the old ones, the revolution will have to define more sharply the in-classes. Nevertheless, some elements of middle-class radicalism are necessary because our society is a complex one and more so because some degree of refeudalization of capital has taken place against which the middle classes can easily react. Because of its strong preference for legality, the role of middle-class revolutionism cannot also be ignored in the context of the misuse of state power by the ruling elite. The important point to remember is that a revolution means that opposing social forces are locked in a struggle and in the first stage the struggle is not direct but takes a political form. It is quite possible that the political form may conceal the nature of the social forces but they cannot remain concealed for long. After the considerable measure of political success it has achieved in Bihar, a social interpretaiion of JP's revolution is urgently called for. If such an interpretation is delayed it may well produce revolution's own antithesis.

The most important challenge to JP has come from those who want to know the socio-economic content of his total revolution. JP has listed a number of programmes which the movement will have to tackle both in the phase of struggle and in all subsequent phases. As stated earlier, it is not obligatory for the leader of a revolution to unfold his entire scheme or model for the society which he would like to construct at the end of the political phase of the revolution. He cannot have one even if he wishes it. because the movement or the revolution itself largely determines the course of events. Nevertheless, being a total revolution, some kind of programme or set of priorities has to be established. It looks as though JP has simply picked up the loose ends of various statements made by Gandhi and put them together as a socio-economic programme This cannot stand the rigour of scrutiny. It will be difficult to quarrel with the way he has put it, but it will also be

difficult to make a consistent and coherent picture or modet of it.

However, JP has also added that 'the one everriding point that I should make in regard to any frame of social and and economic programmes is that what is lacking is not the business of such programmes but the inability and unwillingenss to implement them. The nature and scope of a revolution, its successes and failures, the kind of people that come into it, etc, determine its implementing abilities. That is why one has to wait for all those changes which must inevitable come after the revolution and merely concentrate on those which are a part of the revolutionary process of combat.' As he has futher said : 'This, broadly speaking, is Gandhian frame laying emphasis on agricultural development, equitable land ownership, application of appropriate technology to agriculture, such as improved labour-intensive tools and gadgets of which the *gobar gas* plant is a fine example; development of domestic and rural industries and the widest possible spread of small industries; regional planning and development : political and administrative decentralization of a kind qulitatively and materially different from the present Congress decentralization that we have in the shape of gram panchayats, panchayat samitis and zila Parishads, etc,; drastic educational reforms to destroy its elitist character and to relate it to problems of socio-economic development and of the lives of the students themselves; dismantling the hierarchical structure of Hindu society; and dismantling also the economic hierarchical structures in a manner that will not discourage production or create a privileged class of managerial bureaucracy, linked with the political and administrative class that we have today. Nationalization in our country has not achieved any of the aims of socialism except that of converting private ownership into state ownership. Indeed, it is mutilated against many socialist ends and values.' The statement is entirely unsatisfactory.

A revolution is also a struggle of ideas. Sometimes it is called an ideological struggle. On this score, JP's movement also remains weak although it has opted for a Gandhian framework. The conspiracy of the ruling elite of this country has been that while paying lip service to Gandhi, it has tried to uproot the Gandhian ideology from the Indian soil. JP's greatest contribution is that he is, though vaguely yet, revalidating Gandhi, legitimizing his methods and indeed taking one step forward the revolution that Gandhi started but which was cut short by his own colleagues

under the leadership of the Nehru-Patel group, on the one hand, and by JP himself along with Vinoba, who unwittingly fell into the trap of that group, on the other. However, in the context of an Indian revolution, old Gandhian techniques require modification and further development. No one in JP's movement seems to bother about it.

Nevertheless, one on the bright spots of JP's movement it that it has shaken the Sarvodays movement out of its torpor and sloppiness. All these years, for all their genuine desire to uplift the poor, Sarvodaya leaders seemed quite unconcerned with the role the ruling classes had imposed on them by almost bribing the movement out of its Gandhian political commitment. Whatever the outcome of JP's movement, Sarvodaya will never be the same again as he has pulled it out of its cotton-wool. Sarvodaya and its institutions, such as the Sarva Seva Sangh, came into the limelight with the beginning of the Bhoodan movement and their political eclipse also came with the collapse of that movement. The very concept of Bhoodan was based on charity rather than on the principle of Gandhian dialectics, i.e., change through both opposition and constructive work.

There has been a double irony : (1) the states in which Bhoodan was claimed to have made phenomenal progress are the very ones in which agricultural backwardness and outmoded agrarian relations persist; and (2) the transformation of Bhoodan into Gramdan became an instrument in the hands of the landed elite to perpetuate their power and reserve their interests. It was, therefore, no surprise that the movement ended up by becoming an appendage of the public works programmes run by the governmental bureaucracy. Financially, it came to depend entirely on Government money. These developments were utterly anti-Gandhian in every sense of the word.

It was inevitable that once a section of the Sarvodaya workers revoluted against the corruption of state power, the movement should get divided or even break up. When JP started his agitation against corruption a small coterie of people, who claimed to be true interpreters of Vinoba but were really the spokesmen of New Delhi, attempted to politically neutralize the movement; and when that did not work out, they tried to divided it. For the time being this coterie has been pushed aside but, tied as it is to the coat-tails of the rulers in New Delhi, some behind-the scenes activity is

going on. Despite the hasty patch-up arrived at in their last meeting, the basic conflict between JP and Vinoba remains unresolved.

In their own ways JP and Vinoba represent two different 'ideologies' or approaches and, more significantly, two different forces. These two men, who were heirs to the Gandhian tradition but have lived through a most non-Gandhian milieu all these years, are looking in opposite directions Their differences and JP's agitation against the corrupt ruling class are the inevitable outcome of the contradictions and dichotomies of the politico-economic developments of the past 25 years. More significantly, they unconsciously reflect the great betrayal of Gandhi at the hands of those why systematically distorted Gandhi.

What JP is doing now is the correction of that mistake by the creation, through trial and error, of a Gandhian strategy to meet the exigencies of a very difficult and ugly situation. All kinds of questions are being asked of him which he obviously cannot answer. A strong point of JP's movement is that he has given teeth to Sarvodaya by integrating political activity, nonviolent philosophy, mass action and, to some extent, constructive work. The weakest link in his movement is not the absence of a socio-political model, which the etablishment intellectuals of this country are demanding of him, but a solid phalanx of constructive activity which can be quickly politicized.

The most difficult problem JP faces, as indeed every leader of revolution has faced in the past, is that of organization. His movement is organizationally weak at all levels, though it is strong at the grass-roots. If he is to work with dual power, the need for organizational innovation becomes even more important.

There are committees and samitis of all kinds all over Bihar and there is scarcely a block which has not seen a spate of them. Nevertheless, most of them have been formed on an *ad hoc* basis. The main transformation from students' committees (Chhatra samitis) to people's struggle committees (jana sangharsh samitis) has either not been recognized or it has been very slow. It is important that this transformation should take place sooner than later as the movement moves from the cities to the villages. *Ad hoc* committees which include student elements and others are a hotchpotch mixture and do not make for transformation. Most importantly, the committees at the panchayat level, a group of which will be formed into a legislative constituency, have yet to be

organized independently of the students. A pancahyat at the village level is a grass-roots organization, and to function as an instrument of revolution it must not be allowed to become the competing ground for political parties, as in the city samitis. The only way JP can test his idea of non-party politics is by making the panchayat an institution of revolution. Until panchayats and other samitis come up all over a state, the question of an alternative people's government will not arise and there will be no real people's candidates. In fact, the very building of dual power requires that every place must have a samiti.

Another weakness of the movement is that there is a general lack of training of the movement's activists. In fact, there are no trainers. This was unavoidable at the early stages but the movement's progress depends upon creating a new band of trainers. As JP or his immediate lieutenants cannot go everywhere, the next phase of the revolution will depend upon whether a large number of trainers can be organized. Finally, the organizational character of the movement is still not fully integrated with its ideological, political and economic programmes. There are problems which will call for much struggle and take a very long time, such as the distribution of land. But there are others, like campaigns against caste, dowry, protection of Harijans, preparation of land records and pinpointing and checking corruption. The former involves a kind of class treatment but the latter does not. In the next phase, the revolution will have to take up immedtately the second set of problems and prepare for the former in the third phase.

It is largely because of this factor that the movement as a whole in Bihar has not yet taken a well-defined shape. That is why there is considerable confusion among the elements belonging to political parties supporting JP and others.

PREFACE

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GANDHI'S TECHNIQUE OF SOCIAL CHANGE AND JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

DEVDUTT*

INTRODUCTION

Since the last quarter of nineteenth century, nationalism has been the deminant ideology of people in India. But the main current of national movement has been either enriched or sullied by several undercurrents of sub-currents of ideas and concepts, ideals and ideologies such as Marxism, Socialism, Gandhism, 'philosophic quietism', Royism, Hindu communalism, the cult of terrorism, religion, populism, and regionalism.[1]

All these sub-currents can be broadly classified under two heads; (a) those which were inward-looking, native, people's culture-oriented; and (b) those which were imitative, borrowed, outward-looking, eliteoriented.

The individual components in both these groups have interacted intensively with each other and thus has come into being Indian political thought in an embryonic form.

Tilak, Gandhi, Vinoba, and Jayaprakash Narayan contributed to the theory and practice of native or indigeneous political and social thought had culture in India.

Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopalkrishna Gokhale, Motilal Nehru and C. Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal Nehru contributed to the theory and practice of the parliamentary political culture.

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GANDHI, NEHRU AND JP

It will be noted that contrary to popular belief, Jawaharlal Nehru or not the one who carried forward the Gandhi legacy. Nationalism act the needs of nationalist struggle made Nehru to follow Gandhi. And as early as in 1945 and in the years following it Nehru found that the nationalist stuggle had no use of Gandhi, he abandoned him. In fact, he directed India's socio-economic development in a mance which created hindrances in acceptance of radical Gandhian prescriptions for India. It was not Nehru, the proclaimed political heir of Gandhi, no, it was Jayaprakash Narayan—a one-time political crate and opponent of Mahatma Gandhi—who kept alive some of the seminal ideas of Gandhi and also some of the basic traditions of public life as established by Gandhi during the national struggle.

That Jayaprakash Narayan and his associates in the Congress in agreed with Gandhi is true to a large a extent. But even during the period 1929-48, when Jayaprakash Narayan was ideologically opponent to Gandhi, he was more frequently on the side of Gandhi on many vital issues than Nehru.

For instance, in the mid-thirties (after the Civil Disobedience Movement ended up in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact) the proponents of parliamentary politics had begun to acquire a predominant say in the Congress. Even in the forties this was the position. Gandhi who stood for large and more fundamental political and social ideals and programmes which he thought would strengthen people's confidence, found himself isolated on many an occasion.

Jayaprakash Narayan and his associates found themselves on the side of Gandhi who did not approve of the idea of accepting the 1915 Act granting provincial autonomy. JP supported Gandhi's stand on partition, on the Constituent Assembly and the need for mass struggle in 1945-46 against the British. He took Gandhi's Constituent programme more seriously than Nehru did.

After Independence, Nehru got busy with the affairs of State—particularly those relating to partition and Jammu and Kashmir and the Cold War. In this process he again went back to Gandhi and used him to enhance the legitimacy of the Congress regime. The manner[2] is which he encouraged, supported and co-operated with the leaders of Gandhian constructive work

agencies and Sarvodaya movement contributed substantially to the degradation and de-Gandhianization of as essentially *anti-status quo* and revolutionary set of ideas and concepts, and strategies and tactics thrown up during the national struggle against the British and the Western civilization and all that it stood for.

JP'S CONVERSION

Jayaprakash Narayan's acceptance of the Gandhian view of social reconstruction, after 1947, took place in several phases and at different points of time.

As early as 1948, he endorsed the overall vision of Gandhi. For instance, he welcomed the Sarvodaya Plan which was mooted in February 1948. He said : "It contained 80 per cent of the immediate programme of the Socialist Party."[3]

After 1952, Jayaprakash Narayan's thinking underwent a metamorphosis. He adopted the Sarvodaya philosophy. He formally renounced his faith in the Marxist and the socialist prescriptions to build a new society.

This does not mean that he condemned these ideologies. In fact, he continued to use Marxism as one of the tools of analysis for a proper understanding of social reality.

He shunned the path of parliamentary politics and plunged into the Bhoodan Movement and remained in the movement for twenty years, "in the belief that the Bhoodan movement with the collaboration of Government agencies will resucitate the village and its economy. . . ."

He Interpreted Gandhian ideas and tried to emphasize the relevance of 'trusteeship', nonviolence, Satyagraha and of Gandhi's rural industries programme. His purpose was also to try to evolve a policy of the Sarvodaya approach, the efficiency of the various ways available for the reconstruction of Indian polity.

But all this was indicative more an honest intellectual endorsement of Gandhi than of its total acceptance as an article of faith. This is clear from the fact that during 1952-70, Jayaprakash Narayan also closely collaborated with the leaders of the system in many ways. It took twenty years for Jayaprakash Narayan to abandon the fond hope of changing the system from within and to be substantially disabused of his liberalism and to come back to

Gandhi in a fundamental sense.

In 1970, he admitted, "I have almost come to the conclusion that it is not possible to bring about a social revolution. . . by dsmocratic means; and since violence too is counter-productive, India must go back to Gandhi. . ."[4] Even after having proclaimed his views so openly it still took JP some years to arrive at his concept of 'total revolution'.

He was convinced that the communist model is to be rejected. It destroys the primacy of man's spirit by glorifying power and authority as represented by the party and the State.

The Western model also deserved to be rejected. For it eroded the sense of community life, divorced urban from rural life, and forcibly alienated man from nature. It underlines utilitarian and commercial values rather than the inter-relationship between man's work, leisure, habitat and happiness. Moral values in politics should be upheld.

JP was conscious of his Gandhian leanings. He said, "I have worked out the humanistic philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. . . the highest possible material, moral, physical development of the individual human being."

In June 1932, at Pune he pondered, "Have we forgotten Gandhi", The hungry millions were still exploited. . . How should the Sarvodaya Plan be executed ?"

On another occasion he said : "There is no doubt that had he (Gandhiji) lived even for only five years more, he would have awakened and mobilized the masses and the youth to compel the new rulers of India to cut out their high-sounding but empty verbiage and face the reality of India. I cannot hope to succeed where Gandhiji failed.

"Without wanting to draw comparisons, I might say that if my life is spread for a few years it might be possible for me to compel the new rulers of Bihar to come out of their comfortable homes to face their reality."

JP'S CONCERNS

No doubt Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan represented two different types of personalities. Gandhi was a colossus. JP was one of the tall leaders in the national movement.

Gandhi had a quality which Weber calls "trained relentlessness." He had a tremendously developed understanding of the

dynamics of power, which was not personal. Jayaprakash Narayan suffered from a singular lack of the concept of power. He was, of course, selfless like Gandhi. But he had a big ego concealed underneath his gentle behaviour and verbal polish and genuine humility.

Gandhi was a keen judge of individuals. He had powers to draw the best out of them. He could even inspire them to die for him. But Jayaprakash was rational. He only could encourage some people and, unlike Gandhi, he made them draw out his best out of him.

But still JP, as compared to Nehru, was nearer to Gandhi in some respects—sincerity, compassion, decency and commitment.

In spite of differences in personality traits he was convinced about the following core ideas and concerns of Gandhi : (a) open-mindedness and catholicity, (b) spirit of exploration to search for an alternative to violent change, (c) importance of people-oriented struggle as means of sharpening their awareness, (d) somewhat secularised version of Gandhian ethics of ends and means with reference to public life, (e) the concept of dual strategy of change and of parallel polity.

(a) Catholicity

Gandhi's methodology had both pragmatic and idealist aspects, while his philosophy was purely idealist. Gandhi was not bound to any particular "ism" or "ideology" as such, though he was committed to ideals of practising Truth and Nonviolence.

JP began as a Marxist : he saw in Marxism a panacea for the evils of capitalism. But he moved toward it because his was a commitment primarily to freedom and equality and fraternity. In vain did he move in and move out of the major social and political movements in India in search of a movement in which all these three would be reconciled. But he later realized that "no single ideology is in itself adequate to be adopted as a basis of programme of social change and reconstruction. Further, no single set of institutions, particularly those connected with political power can also be relied upon for this purpose."

JP also realized that "the questions facing me and Bihar cannot be found within the framework of any single ideology. . . . There is all the evidence in history . . . to show that ideological systems have a way of changing their basic character when faced

with social realities and political tasks of revolution-making and post-revolutionary reconstruction. . . .

His political philosophy seems to be : Given certain value commitments and certain goals, problem solving and social reconstruction are various scientific tasks. . . value commitments should not be confused own ideological commitments. . . . Once the goal is fixed and values defined, it is a question for science to determine how the goal and the values are kept clearly in view, these means can be altered by experience."

(b) Exploration and Experimentation

Seen in a perspective, the tone and texture of the evolution of JP's thinking (however zig-zag), his basic impulses and temper and his approaches to national issues of reconstruction and reform have a flavour of Gandhism. In this sense, the distance which JP traversed ideologically—from Sarvodaya to' Total Revolution'—is nil. There is a lot of move ment, search and exploration but there is not much displacement, as it were.

Take, for instance, Jayaprakash Narayan's spirit of restless exploration and to be content with being a simple path-finder. Very few nationalist-minded political thinkers in modern India (from Rammohan Roy to M.N. Roy) were involved in such a sincere, life-long, painful process of unrewarding search for a proper idiom of thought and action which could lead to total social change as Jayaprakash Narayan, who as a unique political explorer chose to keep on travelling hopefully. For he was too much of a romanticist and an idealist to be satisfied with what he found at the end of each leg of his ideological odyssey. In this respect JP's quest is similar to Gandhi's.

JP who fixed his sights lower than those of Gandhi, conducted only *clinical* tests in regard to contemporary revolutionary ideologies in the context of national liberation and national reconstruction.

Gandhi had conducted successful pilot and extraordinary wide-range experiments with Truth in the ghettoes of modern civilazation—in racist South Africa and in colonial India. He left behind a rich heritage. It is the raw material for building a philosophy and ideology and a strategy for a counter-civilization based on love and nonviolence.

Gandhi accepted certain values which he considered as old as the hills. Gandhi only tried to give them form both in personal and private and collective and public life. Gandhi's heritage comprises certain seminal ideas such as Trusteeship, Basic Education, Satyagraha and some unique conventions and institutions such as morality-oriented politics, and the concept polity and Gram Swarajya.

(c) Politics and Ethics

Gandhi had declared that his purpose was to relate religion (*Dharma*) to politics, in fact purify it. He rejected the view that in politics everything is "fair" as long as it serves the end. In pursuance of this proclaimed objective, he ensured that the national movement is conducted strictly in accordance with certain norms. By doing so, he laid the foundations of a political tradition in which politics and morality are correlative rather than competitive. Even the Congress leaders and the Congress factions tried to resolve their differences on the basis of certain minimum norms. They did not transgress the limits prescribed by such norms. The Congress carried its opposition to the British within this policy frame.

This tradition of an ethically-oriented politics came to an end, as it were, in 1967 when a new type of "cold Machiavellianism" was introduced into the entire political process. By 1973, the traditions of the national movement in this regard were thrown to winds. Political corruption regard throughout the country. JP in 1973-74 reacted to this situation in a manner which makes it clear that he sought to reive the traditions of the national movement under Gandhi.

When he saw large-scale corruption, he raised it as a major national issue.

The Bihar Movement had a historical significance in this sense. It made corruption in high places and in the system a national issue—the issue of issues. It also undermined the *psychological* and the electoral basis of the monopolistic hold of the Congress party on the Indian parliamentary system; and the myth of the invincibility of the Congress party was exploded.

(d) People's Power

What was Telengana for Vinoba, and Champaran for Gandhi, Musahari, in a small way, was for Jayaprakash Narayan. He, with

a higher measure of poignancy, again realized that "if democracy is found wanting violence offers no solution, what then is the way out ? . . . We will have to go back to Gandhi." Jayaprakash Narayan explained that Gandhi's plan was to create the power of the people alongside the power of the state.[5] Jayaprakash therefore stated that Gandhi was preparing to go back to the people, to serve, to educate, to change them, to organize them, set them up on their feet, and to involve them, directly in the process of social change.

STRATEGY OF CHANGE

Jayaprakash Narayan was not a retailer of Gandhi's ideas. He accepted and also adapted the strategy evolved by Gandhi in regard to social change.

Gandhi's strategy in relation to social revolution was, as Kripalani described it, "double barrelled" : resistance and construction, or "Satyagraha" and "Constructive Work." A good example of this is reflected in the boycott of foreign cloth and the khadi programme; boycott of British educational system and basic education; fight with the British on basic issues with willigness to negotiate with them.

Further Gandhi's strategy of change is not "revolutionary seizure of power." He said, "A nonviolent revolution is not a programme of seizure of power. It is a programme of transformation of relationship ending is a peaceful transfer of power."[6] He also did not believe in *withering* away of the State but scattering away of the State.[7]

He sought the process of "generation of power" from below and thus build centres of people's power outside the formal structure of state power.

Jayaprakash Narayan learnt from Gandhi the need for "a creative equilibrium between constructive and combative activites."[8] He thought, "continuing constructive activity builds up the strength to resist evil and injustice. Opens up unlimited reservoirs of strength Struggles in their turn, when they come, sharpen social awareness and help to give decisive orientation to the mind and the life of man."

Establishment of a number of voluntary agencies and the Bihar Movement are examples of Jayaprakash Narayan's

counterpart of Gandhi's Satyagraha and constructive work

The role of voluntary social welfare organizations, JP said, is not merely to build establisment-oriented institutions but to catalyse its clientele to bring in fundamental social change.

Jayaprakash Narayan conceded, that "Gandhiji was himself an incarnation of voluntarism. . . he established voluntary organisations and conducted them with the greatest possible interest. He considered constructive work to be a preparation for the social change, as a discipline for nonviolent mass action."[9]

Jayaprakash Narayan said, "If we are thinking of voluntary action in terms of recapturing the Gandhian spirit, then we must understand how Gandhiji himself looked upon voluntarism—all these voluntary activities must converge on the point where there is mass action."[10]

He said, 'We are leaving to the politicians, to the state and to the Government the main task of building up the country and of changing it. is here that we go wrong.[11]

But in practice, JP diluted this revolutionary concept. The function of voluntary agencies conceived by Jayaprakash Narayan was as follows :

(a) mass contacts in society and to win people's confidence,
(b) to create moral sanctions in society,
(c) to involve people in the task of reconstruction and train them for nonviolent action.

It may be noted that the voluntary agencies that he set up never came near functioning as organs of people's power. On the contrary they developed negative un-Gandhian characteristics.

His concept of *Janata Sarkar*, which he evolved in 1974 and 1975 remains the major contribution of JP in the field on innovational effects during the Bihar Movement.

In the context of the Bihar Movement, JP suggested two concrete programmes. One programme was not to let the present Government function and to manage civil life without it; the second was not to recognize the present Government and thus to launch a no-rent campaign.

His concept of *Janata Sakar* was that its organizational units will function parallel to the formal system : (i) to prepare the village to launch peaceful struggle against the present Government,

(ii) to ensure that no injustice is done within the village, and (iii) to resolve the conflicts within the village so that the governmental agencies are kept out of the process of resolution of conflict inside the village.

What did JP do when he launched mass action in Bihar in 1974 ?

No doubt the genesis of Bihar upsurage lay in factional student and party polities in an effort to prepare the ground for elections, it was born in the course of an ugly game of one-upmanship. It had its epicentres in personal pique, the failure of Bhoodan, clash of personalities, etc.[12]

In the earlier stages, however, it seemed that it had become a struggle for the assertion of the principle of continuous and continuing accountability of the people. It was indicative of the fact that after the Indian people have taken one reluctant but major decision to defreeze the *status quo* and question the legitimacy of the leadership, it awakened sufficient social thinking.

But the movement ultimately crystalized into a bifocal pattern (i) some sort of demonstrative mass action to arouse, educate and activize people out of their somnolescence, (ii) then elections under a slightly articulate cross-section of the people in rural areas.[13]

This two-tier consolidation resembles the pattern of the national movement, viz , mass action and elections taken up alternatingly. During1934-47 this pattern helped in favour of electioneering politics—it was saddled by an anti-people structure which turned out to be a paradise for parasitical, unproductive, alienated power elite—culturally backward and morally corrupt class.

JP too succumbed—he could not hold the draft—he too accepted objection as a part of the struggle—he thought the chicken of the new order could be hatched without injury to the shell !

It can be said that Jayaprakash Narayan attempted to use the strategy for social change which Gandhi had evolved during 1929-48. But, he made the same mistake which the Congress did during this period. He could not resist the corruptive proclivities of liberalism.

THEORY OF GANDHI

What about the theoretical aspect of Gandhi ? What is

Jayaprakash Naranyan's contribution in this field ? There is not much that he did in this field. He simply classified and amplified and commented on the seminal ideas of Gandhi. Of course, at the fag end of his life he re-stated his opinions on class struggle and made a plea for incorporating it within the Gandhian strategy for change. He did not elaborate how class struggle which generally does not belong spiritually to the tradition of thought left by Gandhi can be incorporated into it.

But still it is being accepted as practical proposition on the basis of which a cross-section of Gandhians (mostly younger ones) are trying to integrate into the post-Vinoba phase of Bhoodan movement viz., the programme of organizing the landless workers and other sections of the rural poor.

In addition to their normal constructive work activities, the Gandhian organizations have taken the following items of JP's Revolution programme : (1) Lok Samitis—*their organization in all parts of India.* (2) *Sampoorna Kranti Ke Prayog Kshtera* in 100 places. (3) Class struggle involving organization of rural poor for non-violent struggle and to go in for confrontation with the authorities on local issues by youth organizations and Lok Samitis with reference to struggle for the weaker sections.

As regards the other aspects of Gandhi's thought—Trusteeship, Basic Education, Satyagrayha and Nonviolence—Jayaprakash has nothing to add or amplify.

Jayaprakash Narayan only raised questions.

For instance, take his stay in Musahari where he "buried himself in a limited rural area for intensive work for an indefinite period." It only sharpened his compassion but no now ideas emerged.

This stay only affirmed the previous views, viz., the ultimate remedy, moral and social reconstruction of the village community and corrections in the balance of power within it, that we go back to Gandhi, the people, Bhoodan, Gramdan, and Gram Swaraj.

During 1971-74 he did nothing. He was engaged in other fields.

There is another instance. JP plunged into Bhoodan in early fifties. By 1959, he realized "the concept of sharing" remained confined to the agrarian sphere. Since then he had been "thinking how in the filds of industry, commerce, and the professions, we can

go forward from sharing of incomes to a new kind of undestrial organization where there is human fellowship. Human relationship bind and run the organization and govern its life. In 1959, he admitted, "we have not discovered the best way of doing this and we are hoping that as a result of our tour in Britain and the rest of Europe, we may be able to find an answer."[14] Jayaprakash Narayan did not contribute anything in this direction.

He said, "Gandhi insisted that while there has to be a social revolution, the starting point of this revolution must be man himself . . . he always said he was a double revolutionary and that the revolution was a dual revolution—internal as well as external—human as well as social . . ."[15] But he did not contribute anything in this direction.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the hands of Vinoba, Gandhi underwent a high degree of intellectual refinement. Vinoba spun the yarn of Gandhi's thought too fine. A revolutionary ideology was rendered *pro-satuts quo.*

No doubt, JP restored to the process of implementation of Gandhian programmes an element of *anti-status quo* ardour and fervour almost bordering on being revolutionary in its intensity. But in the process of doing so, he rendered it easy, rational, management-oriented, secular.

In his hands, Gandhism underwent a process of dehydration; for, it was shorn of one of its highly ineffable quality which has something to do with metaphysical, spiritual, and creative quality of Gandhi's original ideas and activities.

Gandhi talked of nonviolence. But JP talked of the peaceful method. He said, "What was the objective in all the work that we have been doing under the leadership of Vinobaji in the last 20 years ? One objective was the emergence of peaceful people's power in the country and the observance of nonviolent power. However, we all may be nonvioient. But the observance of complete nonviolence was not possible for a mass movement. So our objective is social change through peaceful people's power."

Gandhi had the will to power. He understood the dynamics of state-power and had his own concept of power. JP's thought aws singularly lacking in this respect. Hence his theory of powerless

polity is vague and woolly. He believed that people's power, somehow or other, will not be subject to laws governing state power. He did not develop systematieally his concept of people's power.

During 1929-79 Jayaprakash Narayan undertook multifarious activities in public-involvement in nationalism and national movement; commiment to Marxism and socialism and socialist movement; dedication to Bhoodan-Gramdan movement; review and re-assessment of Gandhi's philosophy in order to use it for sccial change; efforts to deepen the content of Indian democracy and to strengthen it on a long term basis : and attempts to lay the institutional and organisational and intellectual foundation of a movement towards total revolution.

Though not a seminal thinker, JP has also left with us a body of opinions, ideas, explanations, arguments and interpretations and reflections on marxism, on Sarvodaya, democracy and nationalism expressed in the context of the major practical problems India faced in the course of its transition from a colonial status to that of independent nationhood and from tradition to modernity.

In Gandhi belongs to the "Great Tradition" of Indian political thought and practice, then JP belongs to the "Little Tradition" of Indian political thought and practice. Within the framework of the "Little Tradition," Jayaprakash Narayan's main concerns were two-fold :

(i) how to make the present democratic system get rid of its inadequecics and to make it function more effectively in the interest of freedom, equality and fraternity:
(ii) how to change the entire system in India in a fundamental sense and to bring about total revolution inorder to ensure freedom, equality and fraternity.

These are, theoretically considered, two contradictory objectives. But it is not unusual for mass leaders like Jayaprakash Naryana, who are primarily concerned with 'praxis,' to pursue such contradictory goals Politics, after all, is the art of reconciling the irreconcilable, the ideal and the possible.

But there is a vital difference in the way leaders who belong to the "Great Tradition" reconcile the ideal and the possible and in the way leaders belonging to the "Little Tradition" reconcile

the ideal and the possible. Among the many complex factors which determine this process of reconciliation, one of them is the manner in which various contradictory ideas and concepts get balanced in the over-all thought structure. The leaders belonging to the "Great Tradition" achieve this reconciliation with a grater degree of creativity and subtlety, keeping their central concerns and priorities in tact; while others do it rather "mechanically."

Take, for instance, the balance between struggle and parliamentary politics in the overall strategy of Gandhi in the context of the Congress movement in 1920-47, and the balance between struggle and parliamentary politics in the context of Jayaprakash Narayan's efforts in 1948-79.

Although Jayaprakash Narayan was disillusioned with the working of the democratic system in India and elsewhere, he remained at heart a liberal—an incorrigible and inveterate liberal at that—notwithstanding his Marxism. He used Gandhi's ideas and prescription and to temper his liberalism. This is clear in his *Reconstruction of Indian Polity*; this is clear in the way he conducted the Bihar movement: this is clear in the way he diverted the Bihar movement and accepted the challenge of Mrs. Gandhi in November 1974; viz., to fight elections: this is also clear in the way he worked for the formation of the Janata Party; this is clear in the idea underlying the setting, of "Lok Samitis" as an additional check on the executive, the other checks being press, judiciary and legislatures.

As regards strategies and tactics aimed at basic changes in society, what was the net outcome of the Bihar movement and the net outcome of his involvement in Bhoodan movement ? In short what was the net thought value of "Total revolution" ?

It is necessary to examine in depth the rich experience of Jayaprakash in this regard. This should enable us to examine the problems of application by those belonging to the "Little Tradtion" of thought of Gandhi's double-barrelled strategy to bring about fundamental changes in Indian society. In this connection, we should like to end this presentation by posing certain question : (1) How to ensure survival and continuity of radical movements in the unradical Indian ethos ? (2) Whether the double-barrelled strategy adopted by Gandhi (constructive work and Satyagraha) to create a parallel polity leading to the withering away of the State is still relevant for this purpose and, if so, what

lessons can be learnt from the experience of Jayaprakash Narayan who tried to adopt this strategy ? (3) What are the contraints within which me belonging to the "Little Tradition" and committed to fundamental social change have to work, and how to mitigate the rigours of these constraints so that they can hold on upto such time a "Great Tradition" emerges ? (4) What are the dangers and opportunities when men belonging to small Tradition" handle the concepts and praxis of those belonging to "Great Tradition ?"

In Europe, Marx had Lenin. But Lenin was followed by a Stalin. We know the result.

In China Marx had Mao; but Mao was not followed by Stalin but a Deng. We know the result,

In India, Gandhi was followed by Nehru and Jayprakash Narayan.

The question is whether it is possible to prevent Marxism from degenerating into Stalinism, to prevent Maoism from degenerating into scritism, to prevent Gandhi being degraded into parliamentarism—whether of the Nehru brand or of the Jayaprakash vintage.

These questions are not academic. They deserve same earnest consideation on the part of those of use who still nurse the ideal of fundamental change in Indian Society.

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PEOPLE, PARTY AND STATE IN LOHIA'S SOCIALIST THOUGHT

M.M. THOMAS

My understanding of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia's theory of socialism is rather fragmentary. I had done some reading of Lohia for my study *Secular Ideologies of India and the Secular Meaning of Christ* (Published by CISRS in 1976). This paper draws on that reading. The main writings of Lohia on which my study depended were : *Fragments of a World Mind* (Calcutta), *Will-to-Power* (Hyderabad, 1956), *Notes and Comments,* Vol. I, (Hyderabad, 1972), *The Caste-System* (Hyderabad, 1964), *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism* (Hyderabad and *Guility Men of India's Partition* (Hyderabad, 1970). I have done no new reading of Lohia. In fact the paper is primarily based on Lohia's ideas as conveyed in my book mentioned above.

REVOLUTIONARY TECHNOLOGY AND PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

Ours is a technological age. Technology primarily means material technology, which gives human beings increasing mastery over sub-human nature. Economically it involves development of the means of production of goods and services, that is, development of the capacity to exploit natural resources and increase productivity. At this point the problem of injustice arises out of the division of society into two "classes"—those who have the ownership of technology and those who work it. Justice is to be

achieved through the "socialisation", which would enable production of the goods the people need, and their fair distribution. Thus, socialism or "the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange" is the path towards social justice.

Complications arise when we begin to define the means and ends of socialisation.

Firstly, the means involve the struggle to take control of state power on behalf of the people and their interests. This struggle in one sense is a feat in social technology, as contrasted with material technology, that is, as the exercise of an organised party engineering wilh social forces. This raises sharply the question of the participation of the people in the revolutionary technological process egnineered by a minority party of social engineers, the socialist politicians. The party with its will-to-power and its skill in manipulating mass organisations of power is a real necessity to achieve the revolution. But inherent in it is also a peril. The revolutionary technology and the party of technologists will always tend to view the people as "objects" to be engineered and not as "subjects," and therefore will be somewhat alienated from the people. The question is, how can the alienation be overcome, or at least made less destructive by making possible active participation of the people in the revolutionary technology at a level of consciousness which make them subjects rather than manipulated objects in the struggle for power.

Secondly, it is clear that socialisation of economic power and economic process can never be complete with any revolutionary change. For society of people as a whole cannot control and manage the socialised means of production. The state which is but part of the organised society will be the chief organ to do it on behalf of the people. Here the question of the relation between the state and the people becomes crucial. The state is a necessary organ of the people in socialism, but the state, even a democratic state, in managing and controlling the means of production distribution and exchange has itself to use social technologies of organisation and management with decision-making largely in the hands of planners and bureaucrats and party politicians. The peril here is that the state in this process tends to get isolated and alienated from the people. If the necessity and peril are both real, how can the peril be overcome or at least minimised by a relevant restructuring of the state and its organs.

Thus, both in the struggle to bring about socialism and in a socialist society, the crucial question is : who will control the technologists, the planners and the bureaucrats—whether of the party or of the state ? How can people's participation be made real and responsible ? This is a perennial question.

SOCIALISM WITH A HUMAN FACE

Socialists as contrasted with communists have been aware of these problems of power and social technology ever since Stalinism made them manifest. Most of the revolutions Stalinism made in East European countries were technologically managed. The state in Soviet Russia destroyed the original power and participation of the Soviets and reduced the political participation of the people to the minimum and became authoritarian. Justice as an objective structure was achieved and maintained by powerful technological management. but justice in the sense of subjective participation of the people in the revolutionary process and in the government was minimised. Of course with deStalinisation, even the communists have become aware of these problems. Post-Stalinist thinking in communist parties all over the world shows the awareness, though sometimes it is superficially dealt with as a peculiar Stalin problem, rather than a general situation of the relation between social technology and the people in a technological age. The Czech communists before the Russian intervention in 1968, began to speak of "a socialism with a human face." As a post-Stalinist thinker, Roger, Garudy in his book *Project Hope* (1976) parties his new emphasis on revolution in society culture and state "from below" as constrasted with revolution realised only through the social engineering of the party and the state "from above." Of course, while welcoming the centrality which the Euro-Communists give to the human, one also has the feeling that there is a tendency to throw the baby with the bath-water, I mean, by not realising the utter necessity however tragic of the technological approach.

Have the Indian socialists and communists found a solution to the two problems inherent in making a socialist revolution and building a socialist state, I doubt it. And I doubt whether there are any neat final solutions, or even adequate temporary solutions. That is why the world tragic is appropriate to the human situation, though I realise that it is rejected by the socialists and communists

as existentialist jargon. But I am sure, the alienation of the people from the technology and the state will remain a constant fact. The obligation is to minimise it. Attempts at final solutions often ageravate the problem. There is the doctrine of the one-party proletarian dictatorship followed by the withering of the state which conceives a final solution. Because of the natural withering of the state, no checks were placed on the dictatorship, and it ended in Stalinism. There is the liberal doctrine of the constitutional processes of parliamentary democracy. This is ineffective in dislodging entrenched landlord—capitalist classes in power from society and state and bring only fringe benefits to the people. The doctrine of non-violent people's politics which deny party-and-power politics any role is unrealistic and takes away a necessary instrument of the socialist revolution. These doctrines have not worked out a proper relation between power and justice which can wage a revolution and prevent its betrayal from within. If some deny the peril of power politics to justice, other deny necessity of power politics to justice.

LOHIA'S THOUGHT

How does Lohia approach these twin problems of the relation between people and power-political technolgy in the path towards the socialist revolution and the relation between people and the state in the socialist society ?

Lohia senses the tragic aspect of the human situation most clearly. He refers to the present period as one in which, unlike in "the luminous periods" of human existence, "today force has primacy over idea" often "a political party starts out" professing revolutionary idealism and "ends up" as a new oppression; and this has been the source of a good deal of political cynicism. And he realistically estimates that "there is some hard stubborn element in life which makes it impossible for men and women to realise their faith and their ideals." He says : "Even after the last king is hung with the entrails of the last priest or the last capitalist with those of the landlord, man will not be free." Lohia, however, has no sympathy with leaders or parties who in the face of such hard realities of human nature, give up power politics "as if it were sinful or at least ugly to want power." He says that "to strive clearly to capture power on the morrow is a trust" given to the

socialist party in the name of justice for the people. But he adds that it is "an equally sacred obligation" not to give in to the perversities revolutionary power. He finds this double obligation leading him to "the doctrine of ends and means together with the doctrine of immediacy." By this he means that each act should contain its own justification as promoting justice both as objective transfer of political and economic power to the representatives of the people and as widening the subjective participation of the people themselves in power. Science and technology should aim at "immediacy in democracy and power." Revolutionary act should not "justify a present lie by a further truth, an immediate bureaucratisation by remote democracy, a present sacrifice of individual freedom by a remote democracy, a present sacrifice of national freedom by a remote one world, an immediate murder by a future health." He adds : "Man has become a victim to ideologies of remote success so that the chain of acts of horror lengthens and the last link of the good act is never forged. The immediate test of good act should characterise the class struggle of socialism. Only then will socialism amass power enough to destroy capitalism in both its aspects and to achieve the economic as well as the general aims of society."

THE ASIAN PATH OF STRUGGLE

Lohia stands for a Socialist Party which seeks to equip itself with the force of government to carry out "the politics and programmes which it believes essential for the nation " In this search, he is sure, that Asian Socialist "cannot afford" to follow the path of a "gradual and constitutional socialism" as the European Socialist do. The Asian path of struggle for power should have constitutional and extra constitutional dimensions. But the cult of violence should be avoided. The Socialist commitment is to "socialist class struggle" through the "weapon of mass action which is the "alternative between the ballot and the bullet." It should also avoid the cult of non-violence. Normally, non-violent, it may be called upon to use violence at a critical moment "when the whole people are in revolt and government bayonets are themselves shaking." The party is set to lead the people along this path of mass action through what he calls "militant construction and constructive militancy" going hand in hand. On the one hand,

constructive schemes of "literacy, adult education, welfare community centres" should be evolved around trade unions, kisan sabhas and the like. On the other, "India should become a vast battlefield of local struggles everyday and everywhere." This, he says is the only "preparation for that general struggle against poverty and capitalism which must soon come if India is to survive." This path of mass action is naturally multi-pronged. Not unidimensional economically. Indian poverty is not just an economic phenomenon. It is not even economics plus politics. It comprehends social, cultural and religious structures along with politics and economics. The revolutionary struggle should also be equally comprehensive. Lohia has said that war on poverty in India is all sham unless it is "at the same time a conscious and sustained war" on the two segregations of caste and sex, for instance, and it should cover "all spheres particularly the educational, the religious, social and political." It is thus that an intimate relation between party and people is built up, and the alienation between a revolution technically managed by a minority party, and an unawakened people bridged.

For Lohia this is not only a necessary preparation for a people's revolution but also the guarantee for the establishment of a democratic state and antidote against state turning into a new tyranny of planners and bureaucrats, after the revolution. A people who have developed militancy through local struggles to transform society, have already learned "the art of peaceful resistance against tyranny," and become an instrument of the permanent revolution against authoritarianism even in a socialist state and its organs Of non-violent militancy through civil disobedience, Lohia says, "Man has hitherto alternated between a long-term submission of the cow and a short-term ferocity of the tiger in the eternal struggle against tyranny. With civil disobedience he ceases to be either cow or tiger, but become a simple ordinary man of simple elementary courage. Civil disobedience is aimed reason."

THE STRUCTURE OF THE STATE

While emphasising the spirit of democratic militancy to keep any state from becoming authoritarian, Lohia has given attention to the structure of the state which can foster this spirit. At this point, Lohia advocates "a four-pillar state." Liberalism and communism

have been known only a two-pillared state with the federating centre to building either the organic tissues of healthy social life or the decentralised unit where direct democracy can be practised, giving health to representative democratic institutions. Lohia says : "Democracy can bring warmth to the blood of the common man only when constitutional theory starts practising the state of four limbs, the village, the district, the province and the centre." With the possibility of eventually adding a fifth limb, a world centre. The philosophy benind it is that "sovereign power must not reside alone in centres and federating units : it must be broken up and diffused over the samllest regions where a group of men and women live." The four-pillared State can be "both a legislative and an executive arrangement" for many spheres of activity, for example, production, ownership, administration, planning and education. Neither parliamentary democracy nor proletarian dictatorship has been able to "prevent concentration of power and tyranny," but the four-pillared state "ensures effective and intell-gent democracy to the common man." It will also provide "some answer to the continuing debate on freedom and planning," for no group of central planners or social engineers will hold "undisputed sway" and "cells of numberless little communities will judge and and act and compel sovereign attention."

I find Lohia's conception of the relation between people, party and state in the revolution and after it extremely relevant. But, I suspect the Lohia himself and other Indian Socialists in their reaction from communism did not give sufficient attention to the organisation of the party of socialist technicians along with their emphasis on people's participation and humanist values. Can we develop a philosophy of socialism which has dynamism in the present Indian situation ? Is a united front between Socialists and Communists in India the answer ?

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JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN : THE SOCIALIST PHASE

K.S. KARANTH

The initials 'JP', strike a special chord in the hearts of all Socialists, specially those who joined the socialist movement in the late thirties and early forties I am one of those who joined the movement in the early forties. For all socialists, in those days JP symbolised the soul of the socialist movement in the country.

JP's role in the open rebellion of 1942, is well known. What is not so well known is the way he moulded the mental make up of the youth of the country. Through his famous letters 'To All Fighters of Freedom' he educated the youth of those days on war and revolution.

I was just out of my teens when I first read JP's famous first letter. I was in Belgaum then and some of us, youngsters, could get hold of a copy of the letter. We were all thrilled to read it. As the letter was banned, we read it in the dim light of an underground cell in 1944. The Second World War was raging then. Hence, the following lines gripped me most : "War is a strange alchemist and in its hidden chambers are such forces and powers brewed and distilled that they tear down the plans of the victorious and the vanquished alike. No peace conference at the end of the last war (First World War) decided that four mighty empires of Europe and Asia should fall into dust, the Russian, the German, the Austrian and Ottoman. Nor was the Rusian, the German, the Turkish, revolution decreed by Llyod George, Clemanceau or Wilson."[1] This

against British Imperialism. These letters will have an abiding place in revolutionary literature.

During those days JP was the foremost ideological leader of the socialist movement. We, youngsters, therefore, looked up to him for intellectual guidance. I distinctly remember the thrill and joy I experienced along with a few other comrades, when we read his famous article, "My Picture of Socialism" published in *Janata*. We were all then claiming to be Marxists and were hotly contending with the then CPI cadre and other young and new recruits to Marxism that ours was genuine Marxism and CPI was misinterpreting Marxism, etc. This article of JP provided us with proper ammunition to fire at the CPI cadre; particularly the words "Science progresses by the progressive elimination of untruth from human thought. If Marxism is a science, Marx could not have propounded ultimate truth; he could have made only approximation to truth . ." enabled us to argue successfully with many a new recruit to Marxism that we, in the Congress Socialist Party were the true representatives of Indian Marxism and not the then CPI.

The CSP (Congress Socialist Party) held its conference at Kanpur in 1947. It was the first session of the Party after the Open Rebellion of 1942. The Party ranks were swelled by the new recruits thrown up by the Open Rebellion. The new recruits were eager and impatient and were expecting the leadership to give a new lead to the socialist movement and also to the country.

It was at this session I first meet JP. I was introduced to him by Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya. I was functioning then as the secretary of the Karnataka unit of the Party. Even though I knew JP commanded immense respect from the rank and file of the Party, I did not know its depth and intensity. It has to be seen to be believed and I did see it at Kanpur. It happened thus. The inaugural address of Acharya Narendra Deva was not yet ready for distribution when the conference began. So the printed copies were distributed later by Achyut Patwardhan during the intermission. As the number of copies was small relative to the demand, there was a scramble for the copies by the delegates and visitors and AP was surrounded by over-enthusiastic comrades who were literally snatching copies from his hands. At that time JP happened to pass by and he could not stand this kind of 'mob mentality' and indiscipline among the party comrades. He got angry and immediately took hold of the copies from AP's hands and ordered the delegates

to stand in a queue. A queue was immediately formed and the copies of Acharyaji's speech could be distributed in an orderly manner.

Another incident also stands out in my memory. As the general secretary of the Party, JP had moved the draft of what has come to be known as the Kanpur Thesis. In this draft there was a sentence "all men are equal including women." A delegate moved an amendment to the effect "all persons are equal including women." JP who is generally known for his seriousness while replying to the debate remarked "*Yeh style ki bat hai, yuhan Doctor Saheb* (Dr. Lohia, who presided) *hai.* After all man embraces woman." At this the whole audience roared with laughter and what is more it accepted the original sentence.

After the conference, as a part of his plan to strengthen the socialist movement in the South, JP undertook an extensive tour of the South. It may be noted in parenthesis that the CSP was very badly mauled in the South when the Party experimented with left unity.[3]

As a part of this programme, JP toured Karnataka also. As has been noted earlier, I was then the secretary of the Karnataka unit of the Party. In consultation with Smt. Kamaladevi who had been asked by the national executive of the Party to take charge of the South, we Karnataka socialist organised a provincial conference to coincide with JP's tour. The venue of the conference was Mangalore as JP began his tour of the province from that town.

While addressing a closed door meeting of the delegates to the conference, JP gave a pep-talk and threw some interesting light on the then prevailing political situation, particularly, the inner functioning of the Congress. We were still a part of the Indian National Congress then. As an elderly member of the Party Shri K. K. Shetty, went on repeating "What about Nehru ? What about Nehru ?" JP, who was normally very patient and kind to party comrades, got annoyed and said. "If Nehru is three times popular with masses, Sardar Patel is at least ten times more powerful in the Congress organisation." This shows that JP even then knew that in spite of his talk about socialism, Nehru would not be able to do much in the direction of socialism as he did not have sufficient hold on the Congress organisation It is worthwhile to note in this connection that of all the top leaders of the socialist movement, JP gave top pri ority to organisation.

The Nehru admirer K. K. Shetty, being an elderly member of the Party, drew up a tour programme for JP in South Canara district on the model of the Nehru tour programme. Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, used to address several meetings a day, each meeting lasting only for a few minutes. When JP was shown this programme, he got annoyed and said "I have not come here to give 'darshan' to people." He further stated that he wanted to speak to them, explain things to them. So he changed the whole programme and dropped many places from his visit so that he might speak for a longer period at each meeting he addressed. Now, this was very typical of JP. He always wanted to educate people. Hence, many of his speeches as he himself stated on occasions looked like class-room lectures. This was both a strong point and a weak point of JP. His penchant for educating his audience used to upset his programme in the sense he would remain several hours behind his schedule. Needless to say this sometimes created problems for organiser of his meetings.

To return to the conference. As I was very keen to train party carde intellectually, I requested one of my trusted co-workers Shri N. B. Pujar to take down notes of JP's talk at the closed door meeting mentioned earlier. After the meeting was over, I sat down with Shri Pujar and prepared a draft of the talk based on the notes. Later, I showed this draft to JP at Hubli railway station from where he was to leave. JP liked the draft and with minor modification, permitted me to circulate it among party comrades. It was later on translated into Marathi by Shri N. G. Goray and published in *Janavani*, a weekly published by the Maharashtra unit of the Party.

I may as well mention here another discussion I had with JP in late 1947 or early 1948. At that time some of JP's speeches (as reported by the press) appeared to us, young socialists as too pro-Nehru and we used to get upset. So I had taken an appointment with him at Bombay where I had gone in connection with some party work. JP patiently explained to me, a very junior comrade, the party's stand and stated that the particular speech to which I was referring was not correctly reported by the press. He told me that what he said was that the Nehru Government was the first national government we had after a long period of slavery. We socialists should support it for the time being against the onslaught of disruptionist forces. It needs to be mentioned here

elbow and smiled significantly. This small incident shows how much Prabhavatiji cared for JP and how, like an obedient boy he submitted to her regime. It was this care of Prabhavatiji for JP's health that enabled him to withstand the strain of continuous public work in India spanning well over four decades. In a sense, therefore, India owes much to Prabhavatiji.

Sometime in 1948, a meeting of the Secretaries of the provincial units of the Party was held in Bombay to discuss organisational matters and also for preparing the Party for the first general elections, which was expected to be held after the promulgation of the Constitution. I attended this meeting as the secretary of the Karnataka unit of the Party. I mention it, for, it was at this meeting JP stated "We shall also beat drums with N.M. Joshis and Ambedkars." What JP meant was that the Socialist Party would try to unite all the democratic opposition forces to fight the Congress party in the general elections. It may be recalled that JP succeeded in his effortd to a considerable extent and in the first general election. Dr. Ambedkar's Republican Party was an ally of the Socialist Party. Also, many promiment trade unionists like the late Shri Shivaswami had either contested on the Party ticket or were supported by the party.

In this connection, I may as well narrate another episode. J.P. was touring the South and he came to Madras. The city unit of the Socialist Party had arranged an informal meeting of prominent citizens of the city who were sympathetic to the Party. The meeting was held at the residence of Shri Paramananda, a minister in the famous Azad Hind Gevernment of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. I attended this meeting as I was staying with Paramanandaji then. While talking to this informal gathering, J.P. remarked, "the biggest party in the elections is the caste." It must have been a very painful experience for J.P. to have obseved the predominent role played by the caste factor in the election. It is sad to note that even today, on the eve of the seventh Lok Sabha general election, the country is still facing this "caste party." Needless to say modern democracy and caste will go together. It happens many a time in political movements that differences on organisational matters, cause a serious rift between individuals and groups. Unfortunately such a difference cropped up between Smt. Kamaladevi and me. Since she was a member of the national executive committee of the Party and one its top

leaders, I was in a quandary. As I had no differences with the policy and programmes of the Party, I did not want to leave it. At the same time, I could not function effectively in the party, that is in Karnataka. So I wrote a personal letter to J.P. and informed him about the differences and my predicament. He wrote back to me asking me to see him at Nasik where the Party held its annual conferene.

As J.P. was too busy with the Conference work, he could not find time. So he asked me to sit by his side at meal time; I did so and explained to him my predicament. He then arranged a meeting between Smt. Kamaladevi and me in his presence. Nothing came out of this meeing as both Smt. Kamaladevi and I found it difficult to open up J.P. then remarked there must be something deep. And deep it was.

This incident shows how much J.P. cared for the views and feelings of junior comrades. For, compared to Smt. Kamaladevi, a veteran of the freedom struggle and one of the leading lights of the Party, I was a small fry. And yet J.P. took interest in me and tried to smoothen matters. This act of J.P. made me feel that even a small fry like me was counted in the Party.

When J.P. left the socialist movement to join the Bhoodan movement and Sarvodaya, almost all of us, particularly the youngsters, felt forlorn and sad. Personally speaking, had it not been for the love and affection showered on me by Dr. Lohia, I do not know what would have happend to me, politically Perhaps I would have become a bit too cynical.

Aftet J.P. left the socialist movement, I had hardly any occasion to meet him, even though occasionally I used to attend his lectures on the implications and possibilities of Bhoodan and Gramdan. Even then he remembered me. One day while I was standing on the verandah of the Bombay University School of Economics, J.P. who had come there to see Prof. M L. Dantwala greeted me as though I was his pal and spoke to me. Such were his human qualities that even a one time very junior comrade had a place in his memory shelf.

Once, when I was in Delhi, I wanted to attend a meeting addressed by him on Kashmir. It is well known how J P. swam against the popular current and tried to bring about a solution to the Kashmir problem, which was one of the main issues bedevilling the relationship between India and Pakistan. This particular

meeting was arranged in the Town Hall at Chandni Chowk. Since the hall was small and since it was occupied by the then Jan Sangh volunteers in a pre-planned move to disrupt the meeting, I could not gain entrance to the hall. So I patiently waited outside to hear what was coming over the mike. However, nothing much could be heard as the Jan Sangh volunteers who were determined to obstruct the meeting were raising slogans against J.P. Thus, the meeting ended in confusion. This act of Jan Sangh volunteers enraged me and in the altercation that ensued, they tore off my shirt sleeves.

I mention about this meeting for two reasons : (1) When J.P. came out of the hall I found him visibly moved and upset. His lips were quivering, and the eyes a pool of sadness. Even then he climbed on the footboard of his jeep, folded his hands and joined his palms and saluted the vociferous volunteers in the Indian fashion. Prabhavatiji, who was also very much upset, was tugging at his sleeves urging him to get inside the jeep. She was obviously worried that some crank might throw a stone at him and harm him physically.

As a sequel to this meeting, J.P.'s supporters organised another meeting, this time at Lajpat Nagar, a south Delhi locality. At this meeting, proper precautions were taken so that no disrupters might do any mischief. It was at this meeting J.P. declared publicly that he would not aspire for or hold any public office such as that of the President or the Prime Minister.

What is more significant, when the situation demanded, he did not hesitate to include Jan Sangh in his movement against Congress Party's misrule in the country. As a matter of fact he publicly chided other opposition parties for hesitating to join hands with Jan Sangh. In West Bengal, the stronghold of the CPI(M) he declared. "This kind of political untouchability should end. This quality, this political acumen of joining forces even with his baiters and opponents in the grand strategy of uniting oposition forces, he shared with Dr. Lohia.

J.P. is no more : But his grand passion for freedom and social revolution, the total revolution as he put it, his firm belief in certain basic values of life and society will inspire us all for generations to come.

Notes and References

1. The reference is to the three allied war leaders of the First World War. Llyod George was the war-time Prime Minister of British Empire, Clemanceau was of France, Henry Woodrow Wilson was the American President.
2. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia in his letter to Harold Laski, the then Chairman of the British Labour Party, called Lahore Fort, where JP and Lohia were confined as the torture chamber of the British Empire.
3. In the present day context of the call given by some socialist leaders for left democratic unity, it is both educative and instructive to read what JP had written about left unity experiment he made in the late thirties (see Chapter on 'Problems of Socialist Unity in India') *Towards Struggle* by Jayaprakash Narayan. Padma Publications Ltd., Bombay, 1946.

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JP'S TOTAL REVOLUTION : IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

GEOFFREY OSTERGAARD*

(J.P.'s death on 8th October, 1979 'brought to an end his long and remarkable quest for the Indian revolution'. During his long distinguished political career, J.P. 'moved ideologically from simple nationalism to Marxism, from Marxism to democratic socialism, and then to Sarvodaya'. He fell in love with the ideological and practical realities of the Bhudan and Gramadan movement of Vinoba which, he realised, was not simply a charity organisation but an experiment in non-violent economic revolution. It was a remarkable method for the solution of the country's biggest problem—the land problem.

But baffling problems beset him on the political horizon. Day by day the situation in the country, especially in the Bihar State, was deteriorating. The root cause of the country's critical state of health was the precipitious fall in the moral standards of public life. Political corruption had reached Himalayan heights. There was complete collapse of political leadership, and in administration. The intellectuals and youth who should have taken non-partisan and constructive action and give a lead to the people had grown apathetic and indifferent. An opportunity occured when the students of Guzarat and Bihar gave the clarion call for an

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agitation)

J.P. in 1974 transformed what might otherwise have been simply one more ephemeral student agitation in his native state of Bihar into a broad-based 'people's movement'. That movement reached a climax in June 1975 when Mrs Gandhi declared a state of Emergency in India. J.P.'s Total Revolution then appeared to have ended in total disaster. But Mrs. Gandhi's counter-revolutionary bid to establish a constitutional dictatorship behind a democratic facade was relatively shortlived. In the Indian general election of March 1977, only three years almost to the day after J.P. had agreed to guide and direct the Bihar students' agitation, Mrs. Gandhi and her congress were swept out of office. For J.P. the chief architect of the victorious Janata Party, the election result was his greatest moment of triumph, fully justifying the title by which he was now widely acclaimed : Loknayak—leader of the people.

Sadly, the ailing J.P. lived long enough to see the politicians who had ridden to power largely on the crest of the wave of his own popularity throw away the opportunity he had given them to carry forward the Indian revolution. Only ten weeks before he died but after more than a year of bitter faction-fighting, the Janata Party finally split, an event which led to the fall of the Janata Union Government and the calling of new Parliamentary elections scheduled at the time of writing to be held by early January 1980. In what was to be almost his last public statement, J.P. in July 1979, expressed his 'concern and anguish' at the depending political crisis.

To understand what has happened to J.P.'s Total Revolution since the general election of 1977, it is important to note that prior to the Emergency, the people's movement was largely confined to Bihar, even though the agitation had taken on a national dimension. It was to Bihar that many of J.P.'s Sarvodaya colleagues flocked to give a Gandhian content to the movement; it was in Bihar that J.P. launched, in January 1975, the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini (Student Youth Struggle Force), a non-party youth corps committed to Gandhian non-violent revolution; and it was only in Bihar that experiments were made to institutionalise 'people's power'—a hallmark of this revolution-by setting up Janata Sarkars or People's Governments from the village to the district levels. But, the development of the people's movement in

Bihar naturally attracted the support of all the major opposition parties. Under the umbrella of Total Revolution four parties took steps to unite. To sustain the peoples movement in Bihar, J.P. welcomed the support of the opposition parties and, believing that a viable alternative to Congress was essential if parliamentary democracy was to survive, he encouraged the unity moves. At the same time he declared that his main concern was to develop the people's revolutionary movement and that he would not accept the leadership of any new party that might emerge.

By 26 June, 1975 the unity moves had reached a point where it began to look as though Congress might be defeated in the general election scheduled for March 1976. To shatter the opposition parties by making a pre-emptive strike against them, as well as to safeguard her own personal political position following her conviction for electoral malpractice, Mrs. Gandhi declared a state of Emergency. This ensured the continuance of Congress rule beyond its due term but, more importantly in the present context, it brought to an abrupt halt the people's movement in Bihar. A people's revolution in Bihar sparking off a Total Revolution in the whole country was no longer on the political agenda. The movement now became part of the wider, essentially defensive, movement against dictatorship; and the overriding aim was the restoration of the *status quo ante*. Released from jail in November 1975, J.P. thanks to dialysis threatment three days per week survived to become the symbol and inspiration of the resistance to the Emergency. As best he could in circumstances, he guided the resistance. But, at this time he also shifted the emphasis in his strategy from non-violent direct action to parliamentary action. He called on the people to demand the holding of the postponed election and he resumed his efforts to persuade the four opposition parties to unite.

Despite the premature announcement in mid-1976 that these parties had agreed to merge, nothing concrete had resulted from J.P.'s efforts by 18 January, 1977 when Mrs. Gandhi decided to seek legitimacy for the new political order she had constructed. Her announcement of the election, however, transformed the situation not withstanding that the Emergency had been merely relaxed, not ended. Helped on by J.P.'s warning that, unless the opposition parties united, he would not campaign for them, they speedily formed the Janata Party. Its manifesto was mainly

concerned with restoring liberal democracy but its positive programme reflected the ideology of its mentor, J.P. In an eve-of-poll statement, 'India of my dream', J.P. succinctly and movingly described his vision of a 'free, progressive and Gandhian India'—a vision which, he said, the Janata Party was pledged to strive to realise.

It was widely expected, therefore, that with the advent of the Janata Government large strides would be taken to reconstruct India according to the Sarvodaya ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. The Janata victory was hailed as 'a second nonviolent revolution', comparable to the attainment of independence in 1947. For J.P. and his Sarvodaya colleagues, it was also something more: a new opportunity which had now been grasped in the years since 1947, to complete the revolution which Gandhi had begun. For Gandhi, political independence had been only the first step towards 'poorna Swaraj'—full self-government for 'the real India' of the villages in which 80 per cent of the population lived and still live today. J.P.'s concept of Total Revolution was essentially a restatement of Gandhi's ideal, mediated by his own experience as a revolutionary who had travelled from Marxism to Sarvodaya. The expectation that the Janata Government would follow the Gandhian path was encouraged when, soon after the election, all the Janata M.Ps assembled at Gandhi's *Samadhi* (Shrine) at Rajghat in New Delhi and solemnly pledged themselves 'to complete the work initiated by the Mahatma'.

In March 1977, J.P. and his Sarvodaya colleagues certainly had high hopes in the new Government headed by Morarji Desai, an eminent Gandhian politician. But it would be incorrect to suggest that they, as distinct from the mass of Janata voters, expected the Government by itself to complete the Gandhian revolution. Sarvoday ideology draws an important distinction between 'State power' and 'people's power'. The main aim of Sarvodaya workers is to generate, mobilise and make effective the latter, since the nonviolent revolution is primarily a 'do-it-yourself' a revolution made from below by the people themselves. Experience of the difficulties in implementing Gramdan pledges for voluntary villagisation (as distinct from nationalisation) of land had convinced J.P. and many other Sarvodaya workers by the early 1970s that 'People's power' could not be effectively generated simply by peaceful, loving persuasion, as advocated by Vinoba. Vinoba's method

of nonviolent assistance in right thinking had to supplemented by Gandhi's method of nonviolent resistance to evil : *Sangharsh* or struggle was also necessary. In Bihar 1974-75, it had been shown that the people could be mobilised through struggle against a corrupt, inefficient and repressive Government. In the course of that movement an infrastructure of students' and people's struggle committees had developed spontaneously, and these had provided the basis for experiments in People's Government (the germ of a radical alternative government). Vinoba and a small minority of Sarvodaya workers had opposed participation in the Bihar movement, insisting that Sarvodaya stood for the co-operation of all, including the Government But J.P. himself had made clear that his new 'struggle line' did not preclude co-operation with the Government. If the people's movement had found itself in confrontation with the Congress Government, it was because the latter had refused the legitimate demands of the people and tried to repress the movement. Ideally, he wanted 'State power' to co-operate with 'people's power', the Government helping the revolutionary, movement.

What J.P. expected. therefore, after March 1977 was a Government at the Centre (to be followed shortly by Janata Government in many of the States of the Union) which would encourage and work in harmony with a people's movement for Total Revolution. The Government could also be expected to pursue the policies outlined in the party's election manifesto which reflected many of the issues raised in the course of the Bihar movement; the elimination of corruption, provision of full employment, radical changes in the educational system, the implementation of land reforms, and so on. But generating 'people's power' and building a 'people's movement' were not the tasks of the Government.

As J.P. saw it, 'people's power' had expressed itself clearly in the election of March 1977. The problem now was two-fold; (i) to institutionalise that power so that it could continuously direct State power to work for the benefit of the people, and (ii) to re-create on a national scale a people's movement of the kind that had developed in Bihar 1974-75, except that in the changed circumstances it would not need to engage in confronration with a hostile Government. J.P.'s solution to the first was the setting up of people's Committees; to the second, the development of a

cadre of workers committed to Total Revolution.

THE SARVODAYA WORKERS

With regard to the cadre, a nucleus of Total Revolutionaries alrady existed. It comprised two main groups; those Sarvodaya workers who had accepted J P.'s 'struggle line'; and the youths of Bihar who had joned the Vahini 'Sarvodaya workers' is a nebulous category which includes all persons engaged, whole-time or part-time, in various activities which have their origin in Gandhi's Constructive Programme; Khadi hand-spun and woven cloth), village industries, prohibition, cow protection, and so on. Today in 1979, they number about 50,000 and are attached to over 8,000 Gandhian institutions of which the largest is the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi (Memorial Trust). Most of them adopt a 'non-political' stance advocated by Vinoba, a stance which led the neither to support not to oppose the Emergency; Their work, apart from its Gandhian associations, is largely indistinguishable from the social and welfare work carried on by other voluntary agencies. However, within the larger group of Sarvodaya workers, there is a much smaller group who have taken seriously the idea of nonviolent revolution. They are members of Sarva Seva Sang (Association for the Service of All), the organisation which sponsored Vinoba's Bhoodan (voluntary land-gift) and Gramadan campaigns. The Sangh found itsetf divided over the attitude it should adopt towards the people's movement in Bihar, although the great majority of its members supported J.P. rather than Vinoba who opposed what he saw as participation in power and party politics. Because of its rule that decisions must be unanimous, the Sangh was unable to resolve its differences and in March 1975, suspended its activities. Vinobba had indicated his disapproval of J P.'s line by taking a vow of silence for one year from 25 December, 1974. After ending his silence Vinoba in December 1976, advised that the Sangh should be dissolved. But no formal decision could be taken until those of its leaders who had been detained were released from jail.

When the next conference of the Sangh was held in May 1977, it was in the heady atmosphere created by the Janata election victory. It was natural enough that J.P. should regard the Sangh as the main organisational base for the cadre of adult workers

committed to Total Revolution He advised that the Sangh should not be dissolved and that it should continue as a non-party organisation. The meaning of 'non-party' was subsequently spelt out. Members would not join any political party, link themselves with any party in elections, or contest elections themselves. But it did not mean 'non-political' and indifference to what happens in the political arena. The aim was to develop people's power and to ensure that the people's viewpoint prevailed in political life.

The expectation in mid-1977, was that the Sangh would develop as a broad-based organisation enrolling, either as members or as associates, all those who believed in truth, non-violence, purity of means and a Sarvodays social order. The constitution of the Sangh has been revised to make it a more integrated, modern and also more conventional organisation. Thus, the unanimity rule has been relaxed to allow decisions on an important issue if 80 per cent of the members are in agreement. But it has not developed into a strong and influential organisation.

(One of the Sangh's organisational weakness lay in lack of funds. Attempts were subsequently made to raise funds with great difficulty.

On account of these several factors the Sangh has not developed a thriving organisation of Total Revolution.)

THE VAHINI

By the time the Emergency was imposed, the Vahini in Bihar had received enrolment pledges from 30,000 youth in the age range 14-30 years. On 30 April, 1977, it was re-launched as a national organisation, the target being 50,000 members within three months. But the response of Indian youth to J.P.'s call for an army of young revolutionaries pledged to nonviolence, the rejection of caste, and the eschewal of party politics and elective office (including those in student organisations) has proved disappointing.

But its non-party character is probably a more important factor inhibiting recruitment. Politically conscious youth find the youth wings of the parties more attractive.

Organisationally the Vahini is quite separate from Sarva Seva Sangh and relations between the young and older Total Revolutionaries are not always close. As an independent organisation, the Vahini has its own programme, important items of which

include the right to work and the right to recall elected representatives. Each unit decides its own programme of activities but all members are expected to engage in 'constructive work.' The latter includes combating corruption among local officials, exercising vigilance to prevent black-marketing and, as in Bombay, providing non-formal education to adults and children in a slum district In Bihar, the Vahini campaigns for the abolition of (British style) 'public schools' and the closing of luxury hotels—symbols of the life-style of the rich in a country where half the population exists below the official poverty line. But the main concern is with land reform. In several district of Bihar, the Vahini are compaigning to compel large landowners, who have evaded ceilling legislation by setting up spurious religious trusts, to disgorge their surplus for distribution to the landless.

Among the Vahini members there are some who speak more with a Marxist than with a Sarvodaya accent. They were greatly encouraged when J.P. in March 1978, endorsed the idea of class struggle, stating that Harijans and other 'backward classes' should organise themselves to demand and fight for their rights. But they were disappointed when he made clear that he did not think the Marxist theory of class struggle relevant in Indian rural society and that any struggle must be nonviolent. The Vahini 'Marxists' tend to be more concerned with politics and to place more emphasis on 'struggle', as opposed to 'constructive work', than the others. Some of them have joined the land struggle movement in Bihar, but they found that there is no easy and immediate solution to the land problem. The vested interests in the countryside are still too entrenched to be taken on successfully at this juncture. Tasks for this present and immediate future are conscientization of the landless labourers, teaching them to read and write, helping them to build strong unions, and so on—all of which require patience and hard work. The time for open struggle, for occupation of land illegally held and for risking jail will come later when the labourers understand the nature of their own problems and have organised themselves effectively.

As the youth cadre for Total Revolution, the Vahini, it may be concluded, has not developed into the powerful force that J.P. hoped for when he re-launched it in April 1977. It has attracted some enthusiastic and idealistic youth but even a sympathetic Indian observer has judged that they lack training and ideological

depth The organisation possesses a potential that is more likely to be realised in the long-run than in the near future.

CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY

In addition to the Vahini and Sarva Seva Sangh, there is another non-party organisation committed to Total Revolution : Citizens for Democracy. Started by J.P. in 1974, its members are mainly middle class intellectuals, journalists, teachers, and lawyers. Some of them like its Chairman, V.M. Tarkunde, are Radical Humanists, followers of the late M.N. Roy, an Indian Marxist who developed a theory of partyless democracy through people's committees.

THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEES

In view of the state of the cadre organisations whose combined membership in 1979 in a country of 600 millions does not exceed at a generous estimate, 30,000, it is not surprising that the programme of setting up People's Committees has so far met with little success. J.P.'s idea of People's Committees is related to the experiments in People's Government in Bihar 1974-75, as the nascent soviets of the Total Revolution with the potential of developing into the organs of people's self-government in a radical participatory and communitarian democracy. In this post-election period, however, J.P. seems to have visualised the People's Committees having a more modest role, primarily acting as watch-dogs over the Government and ensuring accountability of elected representatives between elections.

Having promised on the eve of the election to launch a crusade to set up such committees at all levels throughout the country, the ailing J.P. assigned the task of elaborating the idea to a panel of senior Sarvodaya workers. They proposed a pyramidal structure covering both rural and urban areas. At the primary level the committees would each consist of 5 to 15 members chosen by consensus at a public meeting in the village or urban neighbourhood. Their convenors plus one member from each primary committee would constitute the rural panchayat or urban locality committees. Three or four representative from each of the latter would then constitute the committees at the third and

fourth levels, the block or ward, and the constituency, respectively. Convenors were not be belong to and political party and 'as for as possible' members of block and constituency committees were not to be aspirants for seats in Parliament or State Assemblies. To implement the programme the panel proposed an *Ad Hoc* National People's Committee of 50 to 100 persons selected by J.P. which would liquidate itself after two years. This Committee was set up at the end of July 1977, with Narayan Desai, formerly leader of the Sarvodayas Shanti Sena (Peace Army), as secretary. Later similar *ad hoc* committees at the State level were set up in the various States.

At the outset there were fears that the Committees might be dominated by party people and in some areas, it seems, Janata politicians—did make use of them. This may explain why *Guidelines for People's Committee*, issued in July 1978, emphasised that office-holders of political parties could not be members, and members of a party could not be convenors, office-holders or representatives of the committees at the higher levels. But, it soon became evident that the real problem was not that political parties might capture the committees but finding suitable people who were non-partisan to enthuse the people at large with the idea and significance of People's Committees. Broadly speaking, the *ad hoc* National and State Committees are composed of middle class intellectuals and professional people who are either elderly and retired or actively engaged in other work. If the former, they often do not have the energy, and if the latter, the time to devote to the tasks for which they have been appointed. Lack of clarity about the precise functions of the People's Committees and the relationship between the primary committees and the official organs of local gevernment, such as village councils and assemblies where such exist, is also inhibiting. The task of setting up the committees at the lower levels has consequently been left mainly to Sarvodayas workers, although the Vahini and Citizens for Democracy are also involved.

By the end of 1978, it was clear that the programme had scarcely got off the drawing-boared. *Ad hoc* State Committees have been formed in all major States, except Maharashtra, but they were not functioning effectively. But Bihar Committee had met only once are twice in the previous twelve months, and even the National Committee had found it difficult to business because

of poor attendance. Nor was the situation at the lower levels much better. In some other areas it was found that the initial enthusiasm of villagers evaporated when they found that the committees were not intended to extract resources from Government agencies. In this connection, it is significant that some of the more active People's Committees were those concerned with relief and rehabilitation set up after recent floods and cyclones.

Among those involved in the programme, two criticism of it are being voiced by some. One is that it cannot succeed unless the people are first educated so that they understand the nature and significance of the idea of People Committees. On this view, the notion-identified as that held by leading Sarvodaya workers—that a structure of committees covering the whole country could be set up in two years was absured, and involved repeating the same kind of mistake made during the Gramdan campaign. People's Committees where they were set up would exist, like most Gradman villages, only on paper; or—given that they are to be set up by consensus—they would become the instruments of the dominant local interests. The other criticism is that the programme has been conceived and partially implemented in a highly institutional way. It had been a profound mistake to begin by setting up *ad hoc* committees with the task of generating from above, top downwards, the permanent committees at the grass-roots level. The effect had been to dampen what spontaneous popular response there had been to J P's call for People's Committees.

These criticisms suggest a more fundamental point that helps to explain what has happened more generally to the Total Revolution since March 1977. The idea of a system of People's Committees only really makes sense in the context of a revolutionary situation in which the people are exercising or struggling to exercise power themselves. When J P. made his call immediately after the election, he and his Sarvodaya colleagues assumed that casting a vote for the Janata Party had been a revolutionary act, manifesting a widespread desire for a new social order based on a radical participatory democracy. But, the truth of the matter seems to be that the great majority of Janata voters voted against Mrs. Gandhi and Congress, and all that they stood for, including forcible sterilisation, rather than for the Janata Party. And insofar as they voted any kind of social and political order, it was for the one that had existed before the Emergency. In all the excitement

of getting rid of Mrs. Gandhi's dictatorship, J.P. and his Sarvodaya colleagues deluded themselves into thinking that they were riding on the crest of a revolutionary wave. The rhetoric of the Janata Politicians encouraged this delusion, since many of them were happy to make use of the slogan of Total Revolution. For most of them, however—the Total Revolution was effectively over once they had won political power With hindsight, it now seems clear that there never was much of a genuine people's movement for Total Revolution, even in Bihar 1974-75. To the extent that there was such a movement, it was largely though not wholly confined to the core of Sarvodaya workers and idealistic youth in the Vahini; and the people's movement derived most of its dynamism from the fact that it was directed against an unpopular and inefficient Government. That dynamism, and along with it any real semblance of a people's movement, vanished as soon as the new Janata Governments were installed at the Centre and in many of the States.

THE RECORD OF THE JANATA GOVERNMENTS

The performance of the Janata Governments, both at the Centre and in the States, supports the analysis. Briefiy, during the 28 months of the Janata Union Government, liberal democracy was restored and the apparatus of Mrs. Gandhi's dictatorship more or less dismantled. But on the positive side relatively little was accomplished. Ambitious programmes were announced to provide full employment within ten years and to end illiteracy, and a start made to implement them. Plans were made to change the direction of economic development, placing the accent on agriculture, irrigation, small and rural industries, and rural development generally; and the re-allocation of resources in this direction was begun. In Rajasthan, the State Government introduced an imaginative Antyodaya scheme, since copied in other States, based on the Gandhian approach of seeking to uplift the last, the least and the lowest. Under this scheme instead of waiting for the benefits of development to percolate down to the poorest, which in the past they have failed to do, the five poorest families in a village have been selected, in theory by the villagers themselves, to receive various forms of aid to make them self-suporting. The idea is to repeat the process each year until all

families in the State are raised above the poverty line. But, by and large, the Janata record, like that of previous Congress Governments has been more one of promise than performance. In the vital area of land reforms very little has been accomplished.

One reason for lack or real positive achievements on the social and economic fronts is that the new party did not develop as a united body. It remained essentially a coalition of the original four parities plus those who desired Mrs. Gandhi's Congress in 1977. Factional fights, centred on personalities rather than ideological issues, occupied much of the time and energy of the party's leaders. Factional infighting was one major cause of the Janata Government's poor positive performance. But a more fundamental reason was that the party represented basically the same social classes and forces as its Congress predecessors. Janata showed few signs of being a radical, let alone a revolutionary Government.

JP'S DISAPPOINTMENT

In short, as the year 1979 opened, the Total Revolution remained more an idea than a reality. And the situation does not appear to have changed significantly as the year now draws to a close. There is no people's movement worth speaking about; and the cadre of such a movement is thin on the ground and unable effectively to influence events. Among many of the Sarvodaya workers I talked to, I detected deep feelings of disappointment, J.P. himself expressed disappointment when I interviewed him on 6 January, 1979. When I asked him why there had been no resurgence of the people's movement after March 1977, he replied : 'I think that they probably felt satisfied with what had been achieved. It's the same old mistake : that in power, with power, and through power, they would be able to do all that they wanted to as revolutionaries, change the face of society, and so on. It took them some time, I think, to realise that that was impossible, that a people's movement was necessary. But it was too late : the momentum had passed away and it was difficult to re-create the same atmosphere. It was another historical opportunity lost . . . I dont know what new initiatives are called for or are necessary. But some new initiatives have to be taken by somebody. , . I'm out of the picture now because of my illness,

He was convinced that, if his health had remained good and he had been able to provide personal leadership to the movement, things would have been different. They undoubtedly would. But his reply also suggests that he retained the illusion that the Janata leaders seriously wanted to make a revolution. He also seemed unaware of how much he may be held responsible for what happened. He endowed the Janata Party with his own great prestige and moral authority. Although, he did not belong to it, he did not disclaim being its 'Father' and said it was 'a part of my being'; and, when public disillusionment first began to express itself after only a few months, he counselled patience. Give them a year he said, to show what they can do. By the time year had passed, the momentum had already been lost. And it could not be regained by calling on the Vahini, as he then did on 5 June, 1978, to open 'the second phase' of the Total Revolution. It was also J.P. who was mainly responsible for the 'historical blunder', as some Sarvodaya workers call it, countenancing, 'the institutional approach' to the setting up of the People's Committees.

Sarvodaya workers generally are today, 1979, somewhat bewildered wondering what must be done to salvage the Total Revolution which some people, including Vinoba, have said has ended in Total Disillusionment. It would be a mistake, however, to write off the Total Revolution as a total failure. From a liberal perspective. it is something, after all, to have put a temporary Tweedledee in place of a would-be permanent Tweedledum. But, more important from a radical perspective, there have been signs that the carriers of the concept of Total Revolution, as they shed their illusions, are becoming more realistic and are preparing the ground for a new push towards.

ENCOURAGING SIGNS

One such sign was their adoption of a more critical stance *vis-a-vis* the Janata Party and Governments. Public evidence of this was provided on 29-30 January, 1979, when Sarva Seva Sangh, the Vahini, the National People's Committee, and Citizens for Democracy joined together to organise a peace march and a 24-hour fast at Gandhi's *Samadhi* in New Delhi. The demonstration was intended to remind Janata M.P's of the pledge they had taken there after the March 1977 election. The satyagraha

was strictly symbolic, and there was no intention to engage in confrontation with the Government. The demonstration served to sharpen the distinction between State power and people's power and to remind the public that Sarvodaya workers were not, as their critics alleged, the tame constructive wing of the ruling party. That said, the demonstration clearly failed to have the desired effect on the Janata leaders. Shortly after the political crisis boiled over in July 1979, Sarva Seva Sangh held its national conference and used the occasion to pass a resolution sharply condemning 'the manoeuvres of politicians. . .in the capital' who had proved 'beyond doubt their utter lack of regard for national interests *vis-a-vis* their own personal or group interests'. The representatives of the Janata Party who have blatantly broken the pledges and promises taken solemnly two years ago at the Samadhi of the Further of the Nation threw all canons of decency of even party politics to the wind. Thus, they have betrayed the voters who had voted them massively into power hoping to achieve liberation from authotitarianism and hunger.

Also encouraging is the growing awareness of those involved in the programme of People's Committees that the institutional approach is mistaken. The *ad hoc* National People's Committee at the end of its two years term, with its task as originally conceived far from completed, did not, as some of its critics hoped, liquidate itself rather than extend its term. But, the emphasis appears to be shifting towards building people's committees through active struggle If the movement can be persuaded to take courage and dispense with the institutional framework altogether, there may be greater scope for developing a genuine people's committee movement in which committees, whether called 'people's committees' or not, are formed in the process of action at the grass-roots related to the felt needs and demands of the people concerned. The Chipko movement in Uttarakhand to prevent deforestation of the Himalayas provides a model of such action. Another example on a smaller scale is the Struggle Committee formed in the slum clearance area of Khichripur in Delhi by people who are demanding that the Janata authorities honour the party's election pledge to restore to them the land from which they were evicted. 'People's Committees, formed in this way are unlikely to conform to the Guidelines laid down, but they are more likely to develop into a movement

expressing real people's power.

A third encouraging sign is Sarva Seva Sangh's decision, announced in August 1978, to concentrate its activities in selected areas, each about the size of an administrative block. The general idea behind this 'intensive areas' programme is to build an infrastructure of a people's movement for Total Revolution in a significant number of rural bases from which movement can later spread. By early 1979, 110 areas had been selected in 11 States (30 in Bihar and 23 in Uttar Pradesh; Thakuadas Bang, a radical Sarvodayite respected by all sections of the movement resigned as Sangh secretary to take charge of the programme. In July 1979, he was elected President of the Sangh, so it is likely that the programme will continue to be activity implemented. As envisaged by Bang key workers are being asked to bury themseves for a decade in the countryside and to place to accent in their work on action rather than on the preaching typical of Sarvodaya workers in the past. Satyagraha, particularly against continuing and widespread corruption, will be combined with Gandhian constructive work, and the main mobilishing issues will be the implementation of land reforms ensuring 'land for tiller' and right to self-government of the villages.

To complete the picture, it should be noted that the split in the Sarvodaya movement between those who looked to Vinoba and those who looked to J.P. for inspiration is beginning to heal. Over Christmas 1978, for the first time since March 1975, leading workers from both main camps met in conference at Vinoba's ashram. As one former critic of J.P put it afterwards, 'Total Revolutioaries, Gramswarajists'—his description of Vinoba's followers—'and others all found an identity of Interest'.

The fact that Sarvodaya workers were prepared to follow Vinoba's initiative—underlines the important role of the charismatic leader in the Indian movement for non-violent revolution. The movement has always centred on, and drawn much of its strength from, its charismatic leaders : first Gandhi, then Vinoba and later J.P. The divisions within the movement, which manifested themselves in 1974-75 and which were highlighted during the emergency, can largely be explained by the fact that, after 1969, Vinoba on returning to his ashram at the conclusion of the campaign for Gramdan declarations did not really retire, leaving a clear field for J.P. The question must, therefore, be asked whether the movement

can survive the death of J.P. and the passing on, which sadly also cannot be too far distant, of Vinoba, especially as there is no obvious charismatic successor in the wings.

Only in the future will we know the answer : there is now something of a generation gap between older and younger Sarvodaya workers, and the latter are noticeably more self-reliant in their thinking, less dependent on the charismatic leader; and more inclined towards 'collective leadership'. The Vahını might be cited as contrary evidence, since at the start they were very much J.P's own youth crops. But in the year before his death he largely succeded in weaning them from their original dependence on him, encouraging them to chalk out their own programmes. (One small sign of his success in this regard was their demonstration against J.P. when he had accepted an invitation to address a meeting the venue of which was one of the Patna's luxury hotels). Among the younger workers in Sarva Seva Sangh there is a radical group—responsible for initiating the symbolic satyagraba in January 1979, who explicitly reject charismatic leadership and who deprecate the notion that there are, as one put it. Vinoba-wallahs and J.P. wallahs. Distinguishing between knowledge and inspiration for action, they argue that J.P. may symbolise certain ideas and inspire action; but at a certain stage, while the validits of his ideas persists, his ability to ınspire action may decrease. J.P. it was implied, had his own limitations, just as Gandhi had his, as Vinoba also has, and as we all have; but these limltations need not—should not—hinder the further development of the movement. The movement would go on, leaving behind all exhausted Sarvodayites, including those who have become entangled with party politicians.

For these workers, at least, the truths encapsulated in J.P.'s concept of Total Revolution remain valid, and they are prepared for what they rightly see must be 'the long march' towards India's nonviolent revolution. It is now they, and those who think like them, who will carry on J.P's quest.

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JAYAPRAKASH : A MAN OF SENSITIVITY AND NOBLE SPIRIT

DADA DHARMADHIKARI

An incident happened in my childhood. A small girl in the village of my maternal uncle fell into a well. The mother of the girl also happened to be there. She took no time in jumping into the well to save the girl. The mother herself not knowing how to swim, both began to sink. Both of them, however, were saved by others. Asked as to why she risked her own life when she didn't know swimming herself, the mother said, "No sense about my own safety was left in me. As my own daughter had fallen into the well, I just followed suit." This exactly was Jayaprakash. The inspiration to do a thing actually never came from his intellect weighing pros and cons; his actions came straight from his heart. Jayaprakash was a man of noble human pulse. Shri Jainendra often says that Gandhiji's inspirations originated from the very depths of his being. Similar was the case with Jayaprakash too. With such people arguments come later, the chief motivator more often is spontaneity and a call from within. This natural urge in Jayaprakash was marked by extreme generosity. He led his life in accordance with what happened to be a part of his being J.P.'s whole life has to be viewed in this context.

J.P. was a man just like anyone of us. His life was like an open book. He had an unquestioned deep love for Prabhadevi, his wife. Brahmacharya was not his vow. He imposed it upon himself out of his respect for the vow taken by his wife. So far as J.P. was

concerned there was nothing artificial about it, he just lived it. It is difficult to decide who actually was superior in this rare venture, J P. or Prabhadevi. How tunultuous the inner conflict must have been; Both excelled each other and this was their real character. What did J.P. say in the evening of his life ? "I accept defeat while victory goes to Prabha". J.P. had not actually embraced Brahmacharya (celibacy) but due to his love for his wife observed it throughout his life and said finally, "Victory goes to her and to me comes defeat". All this was just natural for him, nothing artificial, nothing imposed from outside.

It is often said that a man cannot fully understand another man. Every man is a mystery and therein lies the beauty of human life. And this is the speciality about man. Insistence was a distinguishing feature of Gandhi's personalty. At any one point it transcends and eludes our grasp. This is true with Vinobaji as well. I once said to Vinobaji that I had noted down what he had said the previous day and was confident that he would not change his version, but what he said that day was eatirely new and was inconsistent with what he had previously said. Vinoba replied. "This means that I am still alive." Same Guruji had also once said that he was not a stone, that he would not change. Great men never harbour attachment for anybody. They do not feel themselves enslaved to anything What they feel commited to is the goal, and goal alone. And the nature of this goal is such as will always elude the grasp though it can nevertheless be attained.

For Gandhi such a goal was truth. For J.P. it was freedom, freedom for all, even for the lowliest and the last. This remained the guiding star for him right from the very beginning And keeping this guiding star before him he proceeded ever forward. In this journey forward he never felt hindered or obstructed by the thoughts either of Marx or Gandhi or Vinoba. Freedom of man remained a passion with him throughout his life. In this concern of his he was never circumscribed or inhibited by any thought of religion or irreligion, sin or righteousness as sanctioned by scriptures of the common usage. Shankaracharya has said that for a seeker of salvation sometimes even dharma becomes a hindrance. Freedom movements ever launched by J.P. never felt hindered by limitations or restrictions imposed by others. If at all there was any limitation, it was that of his gentleness of character inherited by birth.

J.P. might have opposed many but he never thought ill of anybody. Many a difference had cropped up between him and Lohia but at the death of Lohia, J.P. burst into tears and wept bitterly. He had opposed Jawaharlal also on many occasions but did weep nevertheless at Patna on his death anniversary. When Indiraji sent him Rs. 90,000 for the purchase of the dialysis machine, J.P. sent her the message that he felt obliged and respected her sentiment but later on when narrow-minded and account-prone persons like me prevailed upon him, he returned the money with thanks. (He returned it saying that the Prime Minister's relief fund was meant for the poor and he would not deprive them of their share—Editor). This was J.P. with his fundamental qualities always intact. He went to the Himalayas for some rest. But receiving news of the naxalite threat, he came to Musahari (Bihar) post-haste. There he contacted house to house, village to village. He went to naxalite families also. He and Prabhavati both said they would strain every nerve to remove hardships afflicting the naxalite families. This was the mark of a human heart. J.P. was a man with such a heart. He had differences with persons no doubt but never did wrong to anybody.

J.P. had also great love and respect for Vinoba. Gandhiji came of a certain background and had a philosophy of life. Vinoba took it to its logical end. None has transcended that extent so far. Vinoba is not only dedicated to quest for the supreme but is also a maker of sutras. He has not only practised the Yoga of equality but has given us Samya—Sutras (aphorisms on equality) also. The thought content of Sarvodaya is a creation of Vinoba. Vinoba tried to reduce revolution into a fine art. For a short time definitely it yielded wonderful results It was a mark of Vinoba's genius. But our country could not digest all this.

In his search for the process of revolution J.P. arrived at the conclusion that human inspiration cannot come out materialism. The need of the hour was a new dimension beyond Marx. J.P. devoted himself to its search and in the process achieved his own evolution. The element which unites man with man is called love. It is man's very nature. There is no need, therefore, of searching out another incentive. The inspiration to do good to others is veritably human. This can be termed as universal good or spiritual inspiration also. The search for this led to J.P's gradual development.

We may have made different sects of both Vinoba and J.P. Disciples usually do not feel at rest without forming such sects, but really speaking the relationship between J.P. and Vinoba was one of deep affection and understanding Vinoba did talk of two streams such as Ganga and Brahmaputra, but he also said if it helps in awakening the people's power, the experiment is worth making. Lokatma, the collective conscience of the people, is the final support for all of us. Ours is a democracy where people are supreme not the Parliament. Even if the Parliament unanimously decides in favour of untouchability, the people's voice is there to correct it. Many values lie dormant in people. J.P. devoted himself to the uphill task of transforming such people. All great Indians right from Arvind to J.P. have invoked and awakened the collective conscience of the Indian People J P. dedicated his whole life for the worship and invocation of the people's collective conscience. He was quite naturally people's own representative even without getting elected by them. He was verily the representative of the people's collective conscience. J.P. represented the basic truth inherent in every man.

Vinoba advised J.P. to become a Ranchor or a renouncer of the battle front. But J.P. was not agreeable to that viewpoint at that time. This suggestion was born out of Vinoba's intense love for J.P. Common people fail to appropriate such background of great men. And this is why we later on thrust our viewpoint upon them.

It is difficult to find a writer correspondingly as great as J.P. Moropanthis, a band of devotees of God, have rightly sung that they know not when a poet will be born who will depict the true greatness of God. Still a humble man tries to unravel the being of others while an egoist confines himself to his own self.

Somebody asked J.P. why he didn't attempt to write his autobiography. J.P. answered, "There is hardly anything worth writing." This signified not only his humility, but also the way he thought.

Abhyankar said that he could not write his autobiography, for as a common man he disdained telling about his short—comings and as a cultured man he found it improper to speak about his own virtues. Such is the wont with a man of worth.

Once I happened to visit a school. I asked children who they were. One of them spoke of himself as a Brahmin, the second as a

Maharashtrian Brahmin while the third said he was no doubt a Maharashtrian Brahmin but also a Konkanastha among them. When I asked a small girl the same question, she plainly answered, she was a girl. The boys had forgotten this fact about themselves while they very well remembered the different labels about them.

The greatest problem of today, if there be one, is this. Man has today forgotten his humanity while he remembers only the different labels and denominations. J.P. was bereft of all labels and was nothing but a man. He was not circumscribed by any label. He never got oblivious of his humanity and sustained it to his very last.

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JAYAPRAKASH : THE NEW CHALLENGE TO SOCIALISM

SUGATA DASGUPTA

PART I

THE CAREER

Jayapraksh Narayan, popularly known as J.P., was born on October 11, 1902, in a remote village of Sitabdiara. The village, then in Bihar, is now in Uttar Pradesh; a river changed its course and brought J.P. to a new State. His father, Harsu Dayal, was a government officer in the canal department and had four children. Of his two sons, J.P. is the elder.

After completing primary education at the village school, J.P. did his matriculation from Patna and secured a merit scholarship. He then entered the Science College. While still a young man of 18, J.P. married Parabhavati, the charming eldest daughter of Barj Kishore Prasad, a veteran Congress leader and a leading lawyer of the State. Prasad exercised a great influence over J.P. and Prabhavati was a silent devotee of Mahatma Gandhi from her early youth and childhood.

J.P. gave up the college, in response to the call of Mahatma Gandhi, just a few days before his final examination for Inter Sc. in 1921. He later sailed to the United States for higher studies, reaching California on October 8, 1922. There he went to four different universities—California, Iowa, Wisconsin and Ohio.

Studying science at first, J.P. later changed to liberal arts. His subjects of study included such diverse subjects as calculus, theory of probability, economics, business forecasting, bacteriology, statistics and sociology. He graduated from the Ohio University and then did his Master's Degree in sociology with economics as the minor subject. He was awarded a merit scholarship of $ 30.00 at at the B.A. examination; after a quarter he became a "graduate assistant". His M.A. thesis was on "Social Variation".

Among his teachers at Wisconsin and Ohio were Professors Ross, Kimbal Young, Perlmou, Lumley, Miller and Weiss. In the States, J.P. worked at ranches, factories and restaurants in order to earn his living and finance his studies. He came back to India in November 1929, on account of his mother's persistent illness and thereafter joined the freedom struggle in right earnest.

CONTACT WITH COMMUNISTS

At Wisconsin, J.P. came in contact with the local communist leaders, studied Marxism and was brought under its spell. However, on return to India he joined the Congress and was put in change of the Labour Research Bureau of the All-India Congress Committee, when Jawaharlal Nehru was its president. He participated in second Civil Disobedience Movement in 1933, led by the Mahatma, and was imprisoned along with others. During this period, he also officiated as the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress and was nominated in 1938 a member of its Working Committee, popularly known as the High Command.

JP formed the Congress Socialist Party in Nasik Jail in 1933, as a group within the Congress. This was, as we can see now, a landmark in Indian history. For the Congress Socialist Party and its successor organisations, despite their tribulations and failures, represent till now the only major democratic socialist force in India and constitute the greatest challenge to capitalism on the one hand, and to totalitarian communism on the other. The one-time communist thus established, thanks to his kinship with Gandhi and the role of Joseph Stalin, the first democratic socialist party of India. Hereafter, the career of an undaunted rebel started to unfold.

JP played a prominent role the national movement and was imprisoned a number of times. But of all his adventures. some of

which have become legend in India, his daring escape from the Hazaribagh prison on November 9, 1942 in the wake of the "Quit India" Movement, was the best known. JP remained "underground" thereafter for 11 months to conduct the revolution while the police dogged his footsteps in vain.

Departing from Gandhi's theory of non-violence, he organised an armed guerilla band and kept up the revolt. This endeared JP to the people of the country as the "August Hero" and made his name a house-hold word. During this time his headquarters, for a few months, were in Nepal, where he was imprisoned and from where he later escaped with six others, including Rammanohar Lohia JP was, however, arrested again on September 18, 1943, and was released only on April 11, 1946, among the last to be freed on the eve of Independence.

A TURNING POINT

It is interesting to note that soon after he was set free, Gandhi suggested JP's name for Presidentship of the Indian National Congress in 1947—the most crucial year in Indian history—but could not carry it through as the rightist leadership of the party had willed otherwise.

In 1952, four years after the demise of Gandhi, there was a great and sudden change in the eventful career of Jayaprakash. He resigned in 1955 from the Praja Socialist Party, built up by him brick by brick, and gave up party work for ever. For JP decided to devote all his time to the task of social and moral reconstruction of the country.

At the start of this new journey, JP underwent a three-week fast for what he called "self-correction". Eschewing the traditional path of power politics, JP declared in an article entitled "Incentive to Goodness" that dialetical materialism, which had hitherto formed the basis of his work, was and inadequate philosophy. That was probably the most crucial turn in his life and the search began for a more relevant doctrine of fundamental social change. JP now took to Sarvodaya[1] as the new philosophy of life and engaged himself in the accomplishment of a new revolution in a new company—the Gandhian movement of constructive work, of which JP became a leader. The whole panorama of his public life had from then started changing.

JP became, during the following years, one of the three chairmen of the World Peace Brigade, a member of the Nagaland Peace Mission, President of the All-India Panchayat Parishad, President of the Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development and the Chairmen of the Mahila Charkha Samiti. JP is also the Chairman of the A N Sinha Institute in Bihar, Director of the Gandhian Institute of Studies and Chairman of the Afro-Asian Bureau. The last named organisation was set up in 1959 by a conference convened by JP for the liberation of Tibet, and attended by 19 countries of Asia and Africa, to espouse the cause of the new nations.

BIHAR RELIEF WORK

A terrible famine occurred in 1965, in the State of Bihar and JP was unanimously elected Chairman of the Relief Committee especially set up for the purpose. All political parties of the State including the Communists joined the Committee and the Chief Minister of Bihar became its Vice-Chairman. What then ensued was a life-and-death struggle with a natural calamity. In the course of it JP raised a huge sum in cash and assistance in kind and above all, he inspired numerous welfare organisations and volunteers from India and abroad to bring succour to the people whose very existence was then at stake. This was for the first time that various political parties, irreconcilable in their ideological approaches and often engaged in rancour and feud, had agreed to work together under a common leader.

A group of intellectuals of Oxford, forming a study group led by Arthur Koestler, had earlier made a critical study of JP's thesis of political decentralisation which in turn was a part of his main philosophy of "Sarvodaya." Jayaprakash was awarded the Ramon Magsaysay award[2] in the year 1965. In his "response" to the citation of the Award, in the Philippines, JP spoke of this philosophy and of a possible future for mankind which, he thought lay in the achievement of a new synthesis of the two apparently incompatible political opinions of the time.

Soon after the general elections of 1967, when the political structure of India underwent a rapid transformation, a number of parties had expressed their desire to nominate JP for the Presidentship of India. This meant that J.P. was to put forward his

candidature against that of Dr. Zakir Husain, who was to be the Congress Party's nominee. To the great surprise of all, J.P. discouraged the move and pledged his support to the rival candidate. Calling upon the Opposition parties, whose candidate he might have been, to make Dr. Husain's election smooth-sailing, JP made one more desperate bid to strengthen the roots of secularism in India.

The role was re-played in 1969, when after the death of Dr. Zakir Husain, leaders of almost all political parties had at some stage or the other wanted to nominate his candidature for the same post once again. This time JP's endeavour was to prove that the work of a professional revolutionary was more valuable than that of an office, however high the office. This renunciation of candidature was in the true "JP spirit" and fits in with his earlier political postures, such as his withdrawal from party politics at a time when he was publicly proclaimed by many as the successor of Nehru to the Prime Ministership of India.

PART II

A COMMENTARY

The fascinating journey of JP's life represents a two-fold continuum. The first is the furtherance of India's original quest for freedom and the other is the fulfilment of the political mission of Gandhi, much of which the latter had to leave unattained. How urgent these tasks were and how difficult to accomplish even for a whole nation, not to speak of a single individual, becomes evident day by day.

THE FIRST TWO DECADES

A quick perusal of the problems of the first two decades of independence will help us realise the magnitude of the difficulties that have beset the nation and in whose wake many great causes have lost their way. For the quest of freedom and the principles which had once inspired the independence movement were easily thrown to the winds during these years and there were many who thought that the end of the travail was near. What was then left,

according to these fatigued men, was possibly to build mere edifices of power if not ententes of persons and groups. That the power to rule became the sole motive force in these decades and the society of the elite got increasingly politicised was evident in many ways. For one thing, the internal struggle for supremacy offered almost a whole-time occupation to the new decision-makers while its external projection, based on the doctrine of balance of power, estranged our friends abroad.

In the field of economic reconstruction, too, an illogical haste to build an over-centralised economy and foundations of an affluent society then and there, in fact worked in the opposite direction. A more rational economy of self-help and utilisation of the available resources was lost sight of. That the corner-stone of any scheme of social and economic reconstruction in a country like India had to be the ungrudging labour of an inspired people was likewise forgotten. Decision-making was centralised, first in the hands of a party and then in a caucus. Among the many ideals that lost their champions during this period were also those to which Gandhi had held fast unto the end. Consequently, the rate at which the political influence of Nathuram Vinayak Godse (the Mahatma's assassin) increased after his death was almost the same as that at which Gandhi's had declined.

A people that had once stood for freedom and international co-operation thus started functioning in a narrow groove. The economy of the country, despite 20 years of self-rule, continued to be stagnant. Opposition politics, the mainstay of democarcy, become ineffective and fratricidal. India's achievements in the realm of foreign policy were barren too. For while our dependence on the West increased, our relationships with the Asian countries were far from satisfactory. Sikkim and Bhutan continued to be satellites; Nepal did not become our friend; Ceylon and Burma both were driven further away; and the country had to mobilise its army more often than any other Asian had done. Both Pakistan and China formed an unrepentant axis at this time, and India had to flout, over the Kashmir issue, the U.N. mandate to which it was once a willing party.

LACK OF ALTERNATIVE

But, the greatest of the tragedies were not the blunders we

made. For to err is human. The crisis of Indian politics during this period was that we failed as a nation to find an alternative which alone could have been an effective protest. The "public conscience" which the Ramon Magsaysay award says JP articulated was as if hushed into silence all over the country. Caught in the inhibitions of cliches and dogmas, of socialism and national honour, of crazes for affluence and over-centralisation, no effort worth its name was made to champion the cause for which the spirit of India was still seeking an outlet. A strange craving for a stabilitycentrism was indeed haunting the articulate elite of the first two decades.

This was the period when the individual and the small community were squarely forgotten. The case of the minorities was lost not by default but in the wake of a self-complacency that we had already built a casteless, classless and secular nation. The Indian intelligentsia, which had once heralded the movement for renaissance and reform and later joined the freedom struggle, appeared as if a new class had remained in isolation from the people of the country. The latter languised behind as increasing unemployment, soaring prices and frequent agricultural crises held them down. Economic disparities stared them in the face and wealth got concentrated in a few hands; the intellectuals, too struggled for loaves and fishes of office and power as the sole means for their survival.

The need of the hour was not merely to criticise those who were ruling but to introduce different stimuli into the crumbling political structure of the day and provide a new approach to social development. To breathe the fresh air of freedom, to provide a new line of thinking, and to keep the head high when the world was breaking up into fragments needed the courage of an uninhibited mind and the wisdom born of self-sacrifice. Whether Jayaprakash had provided this role in the post-independence era could be left to posterity to decide. But, the fact that the rebal did turn for a new search cannot possibly be denied.

IN THE MAHATMA'S FOOTSTEPS

It is evident that the problems with which JP was concerned were the very same with which Gandhi too was occupied since the later half of 1946. If this is what is meant by a continuum, there

could be no doubt that JP's effort provided one.

Gandhi had, during his last days, three major concerns. Development of harmonious relations between the Hindus and Muslims and ushering in of a cohesive social system was the first. To end our emity with Pakistan by initiating, if necessary, unilateral action from our side, was the second. A determined effort to arouse the conscience of the people for total reconstruction of our social and economic structure based on principles of equity if not equality was the other. A few incidents of Gandhi's life would bear testimony to these and show how keen he was to ensure that the leaders of the nation responded to his call.

In pursuance of the second goal, Gandhi had prevailed upon the Government of India to part with a sum of Rs. 50 crores in favour of Pakistan when a dispute had arisen between the two Governments over this issue. He had likewise expressed a desire to spend the rest of his life in Pakistan and sought Mr. Jinnah's permission for it If some of these steps he undertook were to improve the strained relations that existed between the two countries Gandhi's main interest lay in expediting the process of social revolution with the help of the masses of the countryside. He thus called upon the Congress Party, in what has now come to be known as his last will and testament, to remove the road block and to that end dissolve the party itself.

The purpose obviously was to depoliticise the core of the "establishment" and thus enable it to come to grips with the problems of the people. The other implications of the new move were to ensure that the people in smaller communities exercised larger control over the decision-making machinery, that the voluntary efforts were given preference over the Governmental, and that the civil power dominated over the military. His plea for decentralisation[3] came hand in hand with this testament. Both were to serve a common purpose, namely the strengthening of the democratic society at its roots.

Efforts to promote Hindu-Muslim amity were likewise an-all-consuming task. Gandhi had indeed hoped to see its fulfilment in his life time and worked for it day by day all through the years 1946-48, till he himself fell a prey to communal frenzy.

NEW PRIORITIES

It is no more a coincidence that JP's field of work from 1954 onwards was the very same as Gandhi's. Neither was a result of conscious planning. For the issues with which Gandhi was concerned and which later JP took up in right earnest were the most vital of all. A government with its myopic concern for immediate administrative issues might have overlooked these; but no leader of men could. JP, who had decided not to run for governmental offices, would therefore see things in a different perspective. For example, he could speak the truth as he saw it, since he had no longer to canvass for a party. It is no wonder, therefore, that the areas of his concern were also those which were the priorities of Gandhi.

As Chairman of the India-Pakistan conciliation group, JP made persistent effort to develop closer relations with Pakistan. The logical projection of this thesis of conciliation is also his concern over Kashmir—a dispute that still lingers as the major thorn in the Indian-Pakistan relationship. JP has persistently maintained in this regard that the future status of Kashmir, despite the recent contentions of the Government of India after its sudden *volte face*, still remains to be settled and that there are more parties to the question than one. He had undertaken in this context a goodwill mission to Pakistan (1965). He has also been pleading for the development of a sub-continental approach to many of the common problems of the two countries.

EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION

His other great interest lies in the achievement of emotional integration between Hindus and Muslims. The burden of his logic in this regard is that the interests of the Muslims of India should be as safe as those of Hindus and there should be no discrimination between the two. Soon after the fateful communal riots in Calcutta and Rourkela, as retaliations of the earlier massacre at Jessore (in East Pakistan), JP had espoused the cause of the minority in two outstanding documents entitled. "Time to Think", and "Time to Speak." The highlights of the observations had it that Hindus in India, once on the war-path, were equally ruthless in their acts of man slaughter, but that more Muslims in East Pakistan had endangered their own lives to save the victims of the

Jessore riots than the Hindus did in India. Following the communal riots at Ahmedabad, JP had similarly observed again that the Hindus should not take the law into their own hands, even in the face of provocation, and advised the Muslims, too, to keep away from the growing phenomenon of Muslim communalism.

It was not his purpose, however, to apportion blame, but merely to commend a sener policy—one that JP thought would strengthen the secular character of our State. Even if there is misbehaviour on or from the other said of the border, there should be no retaliatory measures. For, are not the minorities full citizens of the State, as respected as any others, and no mere "hostages" ?

THE 'TRAITOR' DISCOVERED

The biting logic of an undiluted secularist had of course not failed to rouse the wrath of the chauvinists in India, both Hindu as well as Muslim. The hand that struck down the Mahatma did not hesitateto rise again JP's public meetings were thus frequently disturbed with violent disorder during the early sixties and he was publicly dubbed a traitor by the vociferous elements of a communal party. Some members of Parliament took the cue and sought JP's arrest. Some other who were not in Parliament but were more militant went as far as to advise JP, on points of threat to give up his then impending visit to Pakistan. During the language riots in 1967, JP was similariy asked by a section of language chauvinists belonging to his own State of Bihar to "Quit India" as he pleaded for caution and tolerance in the settlement of the problem.

It is not only for this attitude towards Pakistan and Kashmir or the critical observations regarding the aftermath of the riots in Rourkela or the issue of language that the mantle of a traitor has often fallen on JP. His suggestion that the policy of armed in tervention in Nagaland should be given up was also misconstrued. Nagas living in the north eastern part of India have been battling for some time for independence and the Government of India was engaged in breaking down the resistance. JP pleaded, not only as an individual but also as a member of a peace mission, for amity on this front. Later, when relations between India and China deteriorated and lit the flames of war across the NEFA borders, JP

raised the slogan of peace. The plea was for a round-table conference and for leasing out, if necessary, even of Aksai Chin in favour of the "People's Republic."

JP was thus to wear again the crown of a traitor. He was denounced this time not only by Hindu chauvinists but also by ultra-patriotic politicians. Many saw in him "a blot on patriotism," "a dangerous politician," and "a threat to country's honour and integrity." Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Prime Minister, had, at this time—when emotions were running high—to assure Parliament that the policies of his government were not going to be affected by what JP had to say or do and that "nothing, not even a hundred JPs" could change his policy.

SOME CLARIFICATION

It is necessary to clarify important questions at this juncture. JP's pleadings for peace are not the cries of a well-meaning saint or the nervous wails of a weakling : they are moves for a more rational policy of international relations so that the interests not only of India as a country but also of the cause that she represents will be upheld.

The difference between JP's approach and that of his critics, although fundamental, is due to the different interpretations of the two sides regarding what constitutes the best interests of the country. Departing from the traditional theory that a favourable balance of power and national interests always go together, JP finds it far more worthwhile to strive for peace. In his efforts to achieve this, JP, unlike the pacifists of the West, does not call for peace at all costs but pleads for a more intelligent policy that would help secure the goal. What is necessary therefore is to prepare the masses for "peace action." Instead of cries of war, which often push the decision-makers to the point of no-return, such preparation will make it easier for the Government to remain in control of the emotions of its people. This JP refers to as "brinkmanship"; for it will facilitate a call for peace if and when it becomes possible. Such a policy is also had most effective way of maintaining our national reserves and investing these for the social and economic development of the country.

THEORY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Despite JP's great preoccupations with peace missions and foreign policy, his immediate concern has been the search for a new theory for social change. Accordingly, he expounded the thesis of decentralisation of the Indian polity and of development of people's governments at the village block and district levels. The latter were to share power with the Union and State Governments and make it possible, not only for a decentralised decision-making process to take shape, but also to ensure the execution of regional plans.

In the economic sector, JP questions the omnipotence of an over-centralised plan. He sees in it immediate dangers as well as leng-term hazards. The plea is therefore for an alternative aproach to planning, the purpose being the mobilisation of the internal resources first and then the establishment of agro-industrial societies. JP has also shown great interest in technological development and in exploring the new field of intermediate technology—one that would be best suited to a transitional society.

In the area of institutional cange, JP has called upon the big industries in the private sector to meet their obligations, here and now, to their neighbourhood, to the consumers and workers, as well as to take a determined move towards a non-profit undertaking based on the principles of trusteeship.

In the area of structural modifications, JP threw his whole weight in favour of the Bhoodan and Gramdan movements. The latter has sent an army of social workers into rural areas. The movement originating as Bhoodan was suggested at first to Vinoba Bhave by the people of Telengana in 1953, where a violent uprising of the peasants had then taken place. The movement now aims at a radical transformation of the social structure. Its purpose is to harmonise property relations and to change the ownership roles of the citizens dwelling in the small community, not by violence but by persuasion and goodwill. Gramdan thus calls upon every villager who owns land to transfer his title deeds in favour of a legally constituted village assembly.[4]

This of course is the first step : ultimately, in the new society of JP's design, none will own private property as such, although every one will be entitled to his labour's fruit. Neither will private initiative be stifled under the aegis of the dictatorship of "communities." The structural innovations envisaged in a "gramdan"

society aim indeed at arriving at an optimum balance in the "individual-institution relationship" and are being devised with care.

THE MODUS OPERANDI

But how will that society be achieved ? Is it to be reached only through prayers, petitions, alms or acrimonious assembly debates ? JP has relinquished, some of his critics say, the path of struggle. That is however, far from the truth. For, what JP does in his long travels in rural India, even in the hot days of summer, is only to awaken public conscience and to arouse a sleeping Leviathan from its morbid slumber.

JP's call is for struggle. But his "struegle" is neither "party" oriented non "coterie" oriented. It is "people" oriented. All that he wants to ensure in this context is that the benefits of the struggle accrue to the people and it is the people and not a party or some leaders that come to power as a result of it. He wants the people as a whole to move and while emphasising the virtues of non-violence in such movements, JP clearly sees the ugly face of "hidden violence" that takes shelter behind the seat of the establishment and the mask of the elite. JP has therefore talked of something that could be described as "comparative" violence and wants that the violences built in the society are eliminated in toto. In no mood to make any compromise with ruch violence, JP has been unable to condemn those who have taken to "violence" (lesser violence one presumes) against the "bigger violences of the establishment."

The other "method" of struggle emphasised by JP pleads for a people's movement for redistribution of lands, guarantee of rights over the homestead land of the poor and ensuring of credit facilities at the official rates of interest in the shortest possible time. These, together with a massive programme of rural development, one that emphasises irrigation and community reorganisation to raise the living conditions of the people who according to Rammanohar Lohia still live on a "12 paise a day income," are, like Lenin's electricity, JP's priorities of socialism. That socialim—although JP does not use the word, as he finds that such words have lost their meanings—is to be won, JP says, through a demand of the people themselves. To rouse that demand, backed by necessary potentials of self-sacrifice, provides the essence of JP's struggle for the new

society.

JP's reading of contemporary events has it that there is a yawning gap between elite behaviour and mass aspirations as also between social sciences and social action. He further discovers, to his great distrees, that those who are trained in various disciplines have very little to do with the general run of practical life Neither is there any means by which the findings of science can reach the makers of revolution. This chasm between the ideal and the practical, be between theory and practice, accounts for the "culture lag" in national life and brings about a great measure of disintegration.

The scientists as well as the practitioners are however to be equally blamed for the sad state of affairs. What is required to rectify the situation is thus to ensure that the tools of the scientist become culturally substantive and their methodological goals are suited to the needs of the transitional society The practitioners are at the same time to be made conscisus of the values of science so that a mutual appreciation of each other's role would bring the two closer. It is only when this vacuum is filled and a new approach to the problem of study and research is initiated that JP feels, the struggle for the new society will be based on truth and reality.

Even with all these academic interests and his professed disenchantment with any party politics, JP's political career has not declined over these years. His interventions in the day to day life of the country like those of Rabindranath Tagore, create no mild flutter even today. Thus, it is only recently that JP came out with an open criticism of the new political game of floor-crossing and warned that, if this continued, the county might face many new dangers, including that of military take-over. The shap re-action that political parties, almost all of them, had to this and the manner in which they raised their brows were only proofs of the immense political influence that JP still has in the country.

CONTROVERSIES

With all these multifarious activities and his interest in the whole range of national problem JP has been the most contro-versial person in the country. He has, in fact, lived and thrived with controversy, both, censure and eulogy. It must be made clear that his critics, those who do not agree with him, are quite a few

in number. Of these the most vocal are JP's friends—the friendly critics as one may call them.

Although most of JP's commentators, friendly and otherwise, will not for a moment question the value of his efforts, a great many would at the same time think that JP is wearing himself out in search of an unrealisable Utopia. There are still others who indeed feel that JP has deprived the country of a dynamic leadership and could have been much more effective if he was in the government.

The scope JP's career seems to be too wide and incomprehensible to many. His friendly critics belong to a wide spectrum of Indian society : politicians, executives, trade unionists, university scholars and military men included They miss his political leadership today. Accordingly many of his firiends find JP's efforts to introduce an alternative approach, whose fruition will naturally take time, as unpractical. His neglecting of the immediate problems, on the solution of which the country's immediate future depends, and the passage of time, will cheat JP, they fear, of his much-deserved reward, namely the emancipation of his people from fear and want.

There are others, the uncharitable critics, who feel that JP is but an expert in political somersaults and he likes to jump into every band-wagon that passes by. JP would do better, they say, to stick to old loyalties and to go on the track hitherto beaten and known to all.

Will JP heed these warnings ?

No account of JP's career can really be complete unless one takes not of these view. However trenchent these may be, they add lustre to the name. But are these criticisms all misguided and abortive, and will the caravan of JP's life just pass them by ?

NEW RECIPE OF SOCIALISM ?

The best critics of JP are however his friends the two parties of socialism, especially the Praja Socialist Party, which believes that it still carries his tourch ! A good contingent of Congress-minded socialists, democrats in the wilderness and Marxists believing in democracy, also join the fray in voicing protest against most of the personal decisions of Jayaprakash Narayan regarding his own career. They feel, to sum up their points of view, that JP, the

founder of the socialist movement in India, has left it high and dry.

There are yet others, who feel differently and find that despite the prevailing popular impression, JP has been unable to run away from socialism. He has indeed done what Gandhi had sought accomplish at the fag end of his political career by installing Jayaprakash or Narendra Deva of the leader of the Congress. That was the effort to build a new politics of socialism on the culture of the Gandhian scheme for total reconstruction and to make it thereby more relevant to the need of our people.

Socialism originating in European thinking has lost its bite in India. Owing to its inability to relate itself to the culture of the country it has now developed into a cliche. Through years of toil and experimentation JP has produced a new recipe, an alternative that suits the genius of the soil better and has the *modus operandi* to project itself. The evolution of this new thesis of socialism reinterpreted in the light of the experiences of the Gandhian movement has been outlined in the foregoing analysis in a somewhat crude from. The new socialism is the product of practical experimentation, empirical expertise and deep study of many disciplines by one of the outstanding socialist leaders of our time. The borrowed dogma vibrates with life and is ready for a purposeful application. Will the socialists care to consider the new thesis ?

Notes and References

1. Literally meaning, "rise of all."
2. Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, 1677, M. H del Pilar, Malate, Manila, Philippines, August 5, 1965.
3. Commenting upon the Constitution of India, Gandhi had clearly stated that what he missed in it was a rightful place for Panchayats in the scheme of the country's government.
4. To give up a portion of his possessions (1/20 to be more precise) for redistribution among the landless as well as to create a community chest for the welfare of the disadvantaged are some of its purposes. The transfer of title deeds is not to prevent the inheritance of one's legal share but to ensure that no part of one's own property can be mortgaged, sold, bartered, or disposed of outside the village without the permission of the assembly now constituted for the purpose. The Community Chest (Gram-Kosh) is a village fund, each earner donating 1/40 for his income for the purpose. It is worth mentioning that out of 40,000 gramdans of India today, JP's home State (Bihar) alone claims a share of 10.000.

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LIGHT VERSUS DARKNESS

S. M. JOSHI

Many persons are intrigued by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan's statement that the present situation in the country is similar to the one prevalent on the eve of the "Quit India" movement in 1942. His observation, however, could very well be appreciated by those who have the experience of those historic days. On the analysis of the present situation it is evident that the main factors of the then situation are to be found in the present as well.

Undoubtedly the economy is in bad shape. The deepening crisis is indeed very frightening. The all talk about controlling the rising prices in only sound without substance. The ship is without a rudder, and it seems that we are heading towards a crash. The rate of growth is slowing down reaching the point of stagnation. Consequently the essential commodities are in short supply; to cap it all, the distribution system seems to be deliberately designed for the benefit of the profiteers, hoarders, and black marketeers. They unscrupulously reap the harvest and keep the common man hungry and the poor in destitution.

Essential commodities, jobs, tenements, everything is in short supply. Evidently the atmosphere is very favourable. for the growth of corruption and nepotism. Discontent and disillusionment is mounting, leading to sporadic outbursts or violence that provide a suitable opportunity for the rulers to become ever more ruthless and arthoritarian in the name of law and order. The downtrodden in the urban areas due to their numbers, organisation

and alertness of the public opinion occasionally succeed in getting their demands but in the rural areas where more than 75 per cent of our people reside nobody bothers for the hungry, the poor and the destitute. They are in millions but scattered in the villages, the citadels of poverty.

WATER TO STILL THE HUNGER

In Bihar more than 80 per cent live in villages. More than 40 per cent are living below the poverty line. They are ready to work but there is to guarantee of work. Quite a number of them do not have two meals a day and even children are compelled to go to bed just with a glass of water as a substitute for night meal.

Even after so many years of freedom we have not been able to implement even partially the Directive Principles enshrined in our Constitution in this regard, namely right to have adequate means of livelihood. One shudders to think what would happen to the poor in the villages in the event of an economic crash. Even if they get work, the essential commodities will not be available. We cannot forget what happened during the Bengal Famine in pre-Independence days. Millions of people died of stravation. There was food, but the prices were beyond the reach of the common man.

If unfortunately there is an economic collapse, the poor in the villages, particularly in deficit States like Bihar, will be facing stravation. Even if the Prime Minister wants to send food supplies to these straving men, there is no guarantee that they would reach them, due to the several bottle-necks, the corrupt bureaucratic machine and the rotten politics of the ruling party.

The future seems to be very bleak. The politicians end the sophisticated urban elite have no time to think of the fate that will overtake the teeming millions if the economic system were to break down. The politicians and the businessmen are obsessed with only one consideration : acquisation of power and amassing of wealth at any cost. Is it any wonder that corruption is growing like a cancerous breed in our body politic ?

Was not the situation similar in 1942 when the allies were suffering defeat after defeat at the hands of the fascist powers ? In the initial stages of the War. Mahatma Gandhi was against a mass movement. He did not want to embarrass the British when

they were fighting against the black forces of fascism He was only for individual satyagraha. But when the British and their allies started folding their tents from the South-East Asian countries leaving the citizens of those countries to their fate he changed his stand and asked the British Government to quit and leave the people to help themselves. He asked them to quit when he saw that they will not be able to protect the people from the advancing force of fascism.

The situation in Bihar today is not very different. The poor people in the villages are vietims of inhuman feudual forces a hybrid between crafty feudalism and greedy capitalism. The invidious distinction between the high-born and the low-born makes the socio-economic system callous and unbearable. With the rising prices of food grains the landless poor in the villages find it difficult to procure food with the meagre wages they get. Under the circumstances the corrupt Bihar Government is thoroughly incapable of helping the unfortunate people of that State. Even if the Centre allocates food grains for them, in the first place they have no money to purchase it, nor will the crafty politician and the corrupt bureaucracy allow it to reach them. The poor and the unemployed people in the villages are thus deprived of their fundamental human right to exist.

BULLETS FOR BREAD

College students also have now realised that their future is dark. The education they receive has not vital connection with the productive processes in society, and unemployment and corruption loom large in their prospects. Besides, in the educational system also, corruption is growing in leaps and bounds. In their impatience they came out on the streets and demonstrated before the Assembly chamber and tried to stop the members from entering the Assembly, unless their demands were conceded. They asked for bread. In return they were fed with bullets by the paramilitary police The brutal killings both in Patna and Gaya shocked the conscience of the thinking men who think that the Government by its brutal atrocities has forfeited its right to govern. Perplexed and confused by the wanton shooting. the students approached Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and requested him to lead their movement. It is in this context that JP describes the situation as very similar to that in 1942. Like Mahatma Gandhi

he is asking the Ministers to quit and demanding the dissolution of the Assembly. He wants the Congress Government to quit and leave the people to face the anarchical condition by organising themselves with the help of the educated youth who are out on the streets to bring about a revolutionary transformation and build a new socio-economic order.

The economy is going from bad to worse. The political system of parliamentary democracy that we chose for ourselves has yet to reach that stage of development where self-corrective processes begin to operate when the party in power goes wrong. The people are yet very ignorant and have not thrown up an alternative party which could effectively take over and save the working masses from disaster. As a result there is virtual one-party rule prone to use fascist methods to put down popular upsurges. The Chief Minister of Bihar has openly promised assistance of his Government to those who come forward voluntarily to fight and put down the movement led by JP. He characterises the popular movement as fascist and JP as the agent of reactionary forces. Our communist friends of the CPI have joined him in condemning JP. For them it is not new. They did it in 1930 and 1942. Today they are opposing the people's movement under the pretext that JP is out to destroy parliamentary democracy by demanding dissolution of the Assembly. What an irony of fate that those very people who called our parliamentary democracy as bourgeois democracy and a sham are today joining hands with a corrupt Government which does not fight shy of taking help from anti-social elements, for the sake of saving domocracy.

The CPI friends call the Bihar movement as right reaction because in the popular upsurge the Jana Sangh offers its support to the movement. Why don't they join hands with JP and make it progressive ? Their logic is not difficult to understand. The Soviet Government is on the side of the Congress Government with Smt. Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister. How could they take a different stand ? But in the process they are isolating themselves from the exploited masses. It is hoped they will soon realise their mistake.

RURAL REVOLUTION

Meanwhile, all those who stand for the people and the

country will support JP and the people of Bihar who are out to get rid of the present set up. Luckily the educated youth of Bihar have begun to realise their responsibility towards society and the nation. They have decided to boycott the colleges at least for one year. Under the guidance of JP they will assist the suffering millions to organise and build up popular forces capable of overcoming the calamity born out of the deepening economic and political crisis. The calamity will be too severe in the villages where millions of landless poor are on the verge of starvation. Obviously the rural people have to play the major role in the developing scence of the revolutionary struggle of the masses. The masses cannot rise in revolt on their own for the simple reason that they are scattered all over the State. It is not like the proletariat in the industrial centres. Even if they venture to offer resistance, it is always easy for the coercive State power to put them down with brute force. The public is misguided through the mass media controlled and tutored by the Establishment to believe that the people were in the wrong.

Twenty years ago Jayaprakash Narayan enunciated his thesis that the major role in the democratic socialist revolution in India has to be that of the rural masses. He has been striving hard for a cultural resurgence in rural masses, through the Bhoodan, Gramdan, and Gramswarajya movements under the guidance of Acharya-Vinoba Bhave. He has dedicated his life for that purpose. He wants a radical change in the socio-economic structure through peaceful means. It is necessary to create consciousness in the Indian masses that the Constitution has given them an instrument to yield political power through adult franchise. They have yet to realise the potency of that instrument. The main thrust of the Bihar movement is to make the village communities self-reliant so that they can preserve and protect the right of every individual to exist and endeavour to grow to his or her full stature. If they could be made adequately conscious of their rights and duties, they will be able to brave an economic crisis and survive irrespective of what happens in the urban centres

BACK TO THE VILLAGES

The starving masses are seething with discontent and a sense of revolt. What, they lack is a co-ordinated effort to guide their

discontent and upsurge in the right directions. Needless to emphasise that in the given situation the movement has to be peaceful. There is no other alternative. No violent movement or insurrection could succeed in the face of the semi-military and the miltary coercive apparatus of the modern State Sporadic violence will only provide the Government with an excuse to put down the popular movement with force and curail their democratie rights. JP has wisely stipulated, as a condition for accepting the leadership of the movement started by the students, that they will pledge themselves to peaceful methods. The students who have left their colleges to fight corruption, unemployment, the rising prices and for a basic change in the system of education have to prepare themselves for the task, morally and intellectually. Many of them come from the villages and now they must go back to the villages and live with them. They have to learn from them and also to make them conscious of their power. They have to organise Sangharsha Samitis on non-party lines even as they have organised their Chhatra Sangharsha Samitis for their struggle. In due course of time a network of Jana Sangharsha Samitis will be developed from the village to the district and the State level. Sangharsha Samitis will be the organ of power and the weapon of peaceful struggle against injustice, social and economic. Their role has to be both militant and constructive. Once upon a time we laughed at Gandiji's dream of self-reliant village republic. But today, in the face of the creeping paralysis of our economic system, we are compelled to think more or less on the same lines. There will be direct democracy at the village level. The Gram Sabha will take decisions and the elected executive officers of the Gram Sabha will implement them. Thus, the lowest in the village and the most downtrodden will have the right to have his say in the Gram Sabha and put forward his grievances. It is true that so long as the class system prevails, says JP, partyless democracy is not possible. It is a distant dream but the direct democracy at the village level will be the beginning of the realisation of that process if the Gram Sabha, with the Sanghrsha Samiti as its weapon of struggele, has to sholder certain responsibilities. They according to their capacity must be in a position to provide work for one per cent of the population. Most of the villages are Gramdan villages in Bihar. As such they should be in a position to find productive work for ten unemployed persons in a population of

1,000. The rest of the responsibility automatically goes to the State and Central Governments. The basis of our economic planning has to be the unemployed man-power. A plan that provides productive work of whatsoever nature to the teeming millions in the rural areas will start a revolutionary process that will provide solutions to many of our problems such as unemployment, rising prices, growing economic disparties and ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor.

FORFEITED MANDATE

The Sangharsha Samitis will resist eviction of sharecroppers and expose Benami transfers of land to evade ceiling laws. They will see to it that food grains are not removed from the villages without the villages without the permission of the Gram Sabhas will allow movement of food grains only after the yearly requirements of the village are satisfied. This is just a rough idea of the nature of the tasks that the movement has to perform. With the active support and participation of the educated youth, there is no reason for us to be pessimistic. A satyagrahi is never defeated. They will definitely succeed in bringing about a change for the better in the character and moral fibre of their representatives when they go to the polls in the next general elections.

It is often asked why JP is demanding resignation of the Ministry before the term for which the members were elected. He could carry on his movement for the eradication of corruption, unemployment, rising prices, etc., without demanding dissolution. This is a fallacious argument. Dissolution of the Assembly is demanded because the people have lost confidence in their representatives. They have proved themselves incompetent to control the Government that is in power, because of their support. They should have moved a censure motion if they were to fair to the electorate. The failure of the Goverment to save the lives of 20,000 people from smallbox and the wanton killings in Patna and Gaya have deprived it of the right to be in power and of the MLAs to enjoy their term of five years. Since they are not doing their duty to the electorate, the people have earned the right to remove them by extra-parliamentary means of satyagraha and no-tax campaign. A government which is not capable of protecting the

rights of the citizens to work and exist, has no right to collect taxes. These are the valid reosons for demanding dissolution. The movement of the college-going young men led by JP symbolises the challenge of the masses to the state of affairs in Bihar and deserves support from all those who stand for the downtrodden and the hungry millions and for a radical transformation of the existing socio-economic order.

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SUPREME SOCIALIST STATESMAN

H.L. SETH

Jaiprakash Narain did not take long to become a supreme socialist and a socialistic statesman. He brought zest and zeal into Indian politics, jumping from strength to strength, and achieving in days what Mahatma Gandhi has taken decades to accomplish. The political popularity of Bose and Narain was like that of 'a trailing comet. Trailing clouds of glory did they come from heaven which was their home. And not only did they demolish the house of cards set up by Gandhiji, but they put up in its place a new superstructure of simplicity, sublimity, strength and secrecy. And they attracted the youngmen like a powerful magnet. And they have created a permanent gulf between Young India and Elder India. It is a gulf which cannot be bridged over by khadi-and-charkha outlook and outfit.

The measuring of strength with the Congress Rightists at Lucknow and at Faizpur had revealed to Jayaprakash the immense popularity his party had gained both in the Congress and in the country. It link was no longer shouting in wilderness for Socialism as in year 1934-35. It had become a decisive factor in Indian politics. The task before Jaiprakash was how to retain that strength, consolidate it, and then, if possible, let the party expand still more. The situation in the country which helped him to form the party in 1934 was now again in his favour. He could once more swing the opinion against the Congress High Command. He had found a gap in their programme, and that was their dubious attitude towards office-acceptance. His party was out and out opposed

to the new constitution and simultaneously with Faizpur Congress it was decided to hold a Socialist Conference, where resolutions against the constitution were passed. One of the resolutions called upon the country to observe a general strike on April 1, as a mark of protest against the new constitution.

It was even suggested that a powerful mass movement be launched for the ending of the unwanted constitution. All this sabre-rattling took the wind out of the sails of the Congress leaders and created restlessness among the people, which no amount of finely phrased election manifestoes could remove. The Congress leaders, once they had embarked on parliamentary activities, were open to criticism on the question of office-acceptance, etc. It was a strange irony that the Congress Rightists with no love for democracy found themselves being branded as democrats, and their parliamentary programme, assailed by a party, which though Marxist, yet had never favoured a dictatorship of the proletariat and which would have run a parliamentary machine without any searching of hearts if it had the right to enforce socialist programme. It was precisely because the present constitution gave no such power to the assemblies that the Socialists opposed it. But since the Rightists had decided to make use of the assemblies in order to "wreck" the constitution, the Socialists could very well go forward with the slogan of mass action.

All this showed that the leader of the Socialists was not blind to any advantage that may come to his party. He took pains to make it clear that the Socialists were not opposed to a parliamentary institution but only to the brand of democracy Britain was enforcing upon India. And he seemed quite consistent in saying so, for his party had since 1934, opposed the parliamentary programme of Congress

While the general strike programme on April 1 was aimed at isolating the Rightists from the masses, another resolution was passed at the Faizpur Socialist Conference which brought the party in the arena of active working-class politics The resolution was about the B.N. Railway workers' strike It supported their demands and I assured them of full sympathy of the party. Similar resolutions about formation of Kisan Sabhas were passed. All this showed that the Socialist leader was opening up several fronts simultaneously.

But while success had come to Jaiprakash at Lucknow and

Faizpur and future prospects seemed quite bright, no amount of political astuteness on his part could prevent the division in the Socialist Party itself, for the Socialist party was not a homogeneous party like the Communist Party or Gandhi Seva Sangh. In spite of its left extremism, its Marxian outlook and the fact that it was a left reaction against Social Democracy and Liberalism, in spite of all this and its leadership of working-class origin, the Congress Socialist Party could not shed its middle-class complexion. It was not a party of the working class. It was "Pink," but not "Red," and not all "Pink." It wanted complete independence and Socialism and there could be men who believed in both without having read Marx as thoroughly as Jaiprakash and other "Pinks" inside his party had done. So all sorts of people had crept in the Congress Socialist Party—from left nationalists like Acharya Narendra Deo to anti-communists like Masani. This. however, was quite natural. It had happened in case of Socio-divisions had crept into the ranks of the Socialists and one of them had become a minister. All this made things quite difficult for Jaiprakash. Another disturbing feature for the Socialists was the emergence of the Communists in the political field after remaining in oblivision for three years. The formation of Congress Ministries had encouraged the Communists to leave the dug-outs and though they could not function as a political party because the ban on them had not been lifted, they became quite prominent. In Bombay and U.P. they were able to capture several trade unions, and through them and through their sympathisers in public, they voiced their demand for lifting of the ban. The governments of several provinces even went so far as to recommend to the Central Government that the ban on the Communist Party should be lifted.

The Communists benefited from the various divisions inside Socialist Party. Just as in 1934-35 the Socialists had their day and won over several dissident Communist elements, so in 1937 the Communists stole the thunder from the Socialists by capturing the working-class organisation and the youth and students' federation.

The Congress parliamentary programme of 1937 had created as much dismay among the youth as the surrender of Gandhi in 1933 and the subsequent parliamentary activities did—then the Socialists absorbed the revolutionary unrest, now the Communists were the masters of the situation everywhere and Communism

among the students was quite a rage. Again the situation in India in 1937, had a remarkable resemblance to that of Spain after the Franco retreat near Guadaramma. There the Communists gradually emerged as a strong party, and although the Socialists remained numerically strong, the Communists predominated in International Brigade, and due to their superb discipline and organisation made up for the deficiency in their numbers. The Indian Communist Party lacked any Passionaria or Jose Diaz, it was poor in leadership, but even so it benefited at the expense of the Socialists

Jaiprakash, as leader of the Socialists and himself a "Pink," had no hatred for the Communists. Nor any other leader in India had. It is only recently that the tide of nationalism has turned against the Communist Pary of India, because they betrayed the Indian National Congress in the "Quit India" Struggle of 1942. The Congress leaders have recently severely criticized the anti-national policy of the Communist in India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, once a firm supporter of Communism is full of fret and fury.

"Communism is good so far as it touches the curves of human life. But, it is a paradox that while Communists in other countries are concerned with the interests of the proletariat the Communist Party of India has become a part and parcel of the upper strata of middle classes," declared Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru addressing a public meeting.

He also said while millions of people were feeling the pinch of cloth scarcity, millions of weavers in this country were sitting idle for want of yarn due to the bungling of bureaucracy and declared that this anomally must go.

Addressing a meeting at Mohammedabad, Pandit Nehru said : "It is improper for you to contribute to the victory or any other end. Tell the officials responsible for collection that you are no more going to submit to these sorts of forcible collections."

He also asked the people to shed their fear complex and face the world bravely.

What would have been the attitude of Shri Jayaprakash Narain, if the were out of the prison bars to-day, towards the Communist Party of India ? It is difficult to say with cocksure confidence. But, it is not difficult to guess that his attitude could not be different from that of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In fact, Mr. Narain's censure would be even stronger than Pandit Nehru, becasue the Congress Socialists have taken even a greater part in

the "Quit-India" struggle than the ordinary run of Satyagraha-imbued Congressmen, so much so that the Government of India is treating them as State prisoners guilty of high treason and has not released them as yet.

But that at time the conditions were different. Shri Jaiparkash Narain was drawn more towards the Communists even than the members of the Congress He was always in favour of left unity. He knew that apart from certain differences in outlook he was nearer to Communists than to Congress radicals, left nationalists or liberals. His Socialism was the product of an epoch in which co-operation with the Communists could not be ruled out. But, there was no emergency of war as in Spain to keep the Socialists united with the Communists. There could be only fraternal left brotherhood which could bring the two parties nearer. Jaiparkash had this feeling, some Communists had it, but a great number of the Socialists and Communists have never felt such need for Socialists unity. And an anti-Communist group led by Masani had emerged in the Congress Socialist Party which had made the position of the "Pinks" untenable. Besides, the aims and objects of the two parties being almost identical the increase of the Communist influence among the working class and the youth led to a natural rivalry between the two parties.

Towards the close of 1937, the Socialists recovered from the crisis, and the element which had favoured working of the constitution in collaboration with Congress Ministries was discredited. Jaiparkash was able to stem the rot and impress upon his comrades that the rights of the working class could be safeguarded only by the vigilance of the Socialist Party and not by hob-nobbing with the Gandhites. The Socialist Party could not become an offshoot of Gandhi Seva Sangh. It must remain on the left if it was to exist at all. The question was how much left ? This was a new dilemma that it faced after the emergence of the Communists. Formerly it never worried Jaiprakash how much left his party was, because it was the only left party and though on such questions as confiscation of property and dictatorship of the proletariat Jaiprakash sometimes satisfied the Gandhites by saying that the Socialists wanted neither, he had stood by all the implications of Marxism and defence of soviet Russia was the main feature of the Socialist policy. Now that the Communists wanted to have all the monopoly of Marxism and pro-Soviet sentiments, it was

naturally asked how much left was Congress Socialist Party ? The Congress Socialists were not entirely a party of the middle class. In Bihar, U.P. and Punjab, the Congress Socialist Party had considerable backing of the peasants and in some cases of the working class too. It could not give up faith in Marxism and sympathy for Soviet Russia, even if the "Pinks" were not at the helm. But though devotion to Marxism remained as it was formerly, in the sense that most of the Marxian doctrines about inevitability of class conflict and Socialism were accepted, the Congress Socialist Party had to admit that it did not follow Marx in its entirety and could not be pro-Soviet as much as the Communists were. In other words, its middle class complexion could not be entirely shed, or if it had been it would have merged in the Communists Party. It had to stress that thought it could not accept Gandhian, it would have to adjust Marxism to Indian traditions, and thought it sympathised with Russia, its loyalty was first to India. In the controversies which were carried on between the Communists and the Socialists, it became clear that the Socialists were critical of the purges in Russia and of its foreign policy, though they naturally sympathised with its economic system.

The criticism of Russia was a prominent feature of the policy of the British Labour Party and all other parties of the Second International. They also differed from the Communists in application of Marxism, but it is difficult to compare Jaiprakash with British labour leaders or his party with British Labour Party. The difference has been stressed in the foregoing pages. Here, it may only be remarked that while the British labour leaders minimised the role of the working class in a socialist revolution, Jaiprakash had faith in the combined action of the people, the workers and the peasants in achieving national revolution and then socialist revolution. This point would become clear, if we remember that the Anarchiststoo have their differences with the Communists, but they believe in militant working class action so they could not be bracketed with the parties of the Second International. The Indian Socialists also had a similar militancy of outlook; which though we could not call revolutionary in the Marxist sense is yet understandable as a half-way house between Social Democracy and Communism. This militant attitude was evident in their peaceful struggle for Independence of India. This British Labour Party never opposed the imperialism of its ruling class, and gave

a tacit consent to its exploitation of India.

Thus the new orientation of the Socialist policy became a source of weakness as well as strength to the Socialists, weakness in the sense that it was not revolutionary Marxism, and thus it cost them the loss of certain working-class organisations and students' federation's strength, because the left nationalists and anti-Gandhist elements remained under its influence. A part of the peasants in the Punjab, Bihar and U.P., who only vaguely understood Marxism but wanted freedom and ending of their economic-grievances, remained solidly behind the Congress Socialist Party.

Historically speaking any such orientation of policy among the Socialists was inevitable. Not only that it was partly a middle-class organisation. In Spain the Socialists were as much the party of the working class as the Communists were, nay, even more, for while the Socialists had a strong trade union *Union General de Travajadores* behind them, the Communists had none. In spite of this the Communists when they appeared on the scene, became the spearhead of revolutionary action and even the workers of the *Union General de Travajadores* and some of the Socialist rank and file looked to them for guidance. Extreme Socialism of the type Spanish Socialists and Jaiprakash represented, is born due to a reaction against Liberalism and Social Democracy and as soon as it has uprooted them there are only three alternatives before it, to become a whole-hogg Marxist and merge into the Communist Party, or make the existence of the Communist Party superfluous by itself following communist lines as in Mexico, or to give way to the Communist Party and let it dominate working class politics while the Socialist Party continues to represent the working-class interests by serving as a half-way house between the Anarchists and the Communists, as in Spain and between the nationalists and the Communists as in India. It never degenerates into mere Liberalism but the period of its working class leadership is over.

To attain anything like its previous strength it must look more and more to alliances with the Communists or the nationalists. The Spanish Socialists survived due to alliance with the Communists, the Indian Socialists by joining hands with left nationalists.

That a communist-socialist alliance did not come about in India was no fault of Jaiprakash. It was as much due to the

indifference and incompetence of the Indian Communists as the presence of a vociferous anti-Communist section inside the Congress Socialist Party. The Communists by their negative attitude made the position of the "Pinks" like Jaiprakash Narain difficult, and the result was the Jaiprakash had to let the anti-communist element in the Congress Socialist Party have its way. This anti-communist element also happened to be to a great extent anti-Marxist, its Socialist was more or less like that of the British Labour Party with this difference that it was as much hostile to British imperialism as any one else in India. Jaiprakash allowed it to critscise the Communists, because the Communists were criticising the entire Socialist Party and calling it Trotskyite, etc., but he never allowed the economic programme of the Congress Socialist Party to be tampered with.

The strength of the Socialists inside the Congress and the All-India Congress Committee had remained undisturbed due to the election crisis and the emergence of the Communist Party. It was this strength which induced Jaiprakash to favour Subhas Bose as candidate for Haripura. With the end of second term of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Socialists were again in danger of being without a leader of front rank to guide them. True, Jaiprakash had earned immense popularty but he was no match for the Gandhites who had been in the political field much earlier than he and had made a place for themselves. Only Nehru and Subhas Bose could claim to have popularity equal to these rightist leaders. But Nehru's popularity was being overshadowed by that of Subhas Chandra Bose, who had burst into headlines after his prolonged banishment from the country. He was the old enemy of the Congress High Command who had crossed swords with them long before the Socialist Party came into being. In 1937, he represented the popular reaction against Congress leaders. Gandhites by reviving the old slogans of the Swarajists had captured the votes, but the mass opinion, always revolutionary and susceptible of slightest influence, was swung by Subhas Chandra Bose. The Congress Ministries had only recently assumed office. The doubts of the people were not allayed. Subhas Bose was bold enough to voice these doubts. People believed that in his hands their destiny was safe. Besides they valued his past sacrifices. The Socialists who were themselves for constructive criticism of the Congress Ministries welcomed the move of Bose and helped him to get

elected. Jawaharlal Nehru's influence on the Indian socialist movement was too deep to be effaced by his ceasing to be the President of the Congress. He still remained a source of inspiration to Socialists and a protagonist of their cause but his nostalgia for foreign affairs was there and as the Congress Ministries settled down to work, Nehru thought of how best to help the cause of Socialism in Spain and China. Of Indian Socialists Jaiprakash because of his foreign training was very sensitives to happenings in foreign countries, and on his initiative the Socialists did act for Spain and China. But to Nehru internationalism meant much more. Besides being an independent individual without formal association with any political group, he had greater leisure and energy to think on these matters. He turned to them with much zeal and enthusiasm when the pressure of home affairs was not there. Such was the state in 1937-38. The struggle with Britain had ended and though the work of the Congress Ministries needed a vigilant eye. it was nevertheless a breathing space for Congress.

Mr. Jaiprakash brought together the forces of the left, as Mahatma Gandhi has often collected the forces of the right under his holy wings. Mr. Narain, of course, was not the mother-hen of the forward force, as Mahatma Gandhi has always been the mother-hen of faithful followers. Mr. Narain had no brood. In fact, he himfelf was one of the brood. But ever since then such was the zest of his zeal that he was able to collect leftish brothers and sisters round the camp fire of flaming nationalism, just as a small child with an abnormal sense of responsibility behaves paternally towards his kith and kin. With a mighty effort he was able to save the infant organization from the claws of the stronger and stouter elder hawks of Indian politics.

Hob-nobbing is of no use where there is a call for action. A shilly-shally attitude is the enemy of the young forces. And Mr. Narain, thank God, has never been guilty of a shilly-shally indetermined mind and body. He has always swooped to his work like a hawk. And that has been the paramount source of his success. Having stood for an all-out Socialist Programme, he made on secret of his innermost heart and was ever ready to give the lukewarm nationalists a bit of his mind. His was not a party of the middle-class dictatorship If he believed in the masses, he wanted the masses alone to dictate the programme of the Congress Socialist Party. And since the interest of the masses came into

conflict with those of the middle classes, he was not afraid of taking sides. Once he decided to be red, he did not worry how red he was, so long as he was not green.

The vision of Shri Jaiprakash was not confined to the Indian horizon. He chewed the international politics with the appetite of a political glutton.

The vigilant eye was kept by the socialists whose gaze was as much fixed on Wardha as on Barcelona, Madrid and Chunking. Subhas Bose also wanted the Ministries to function well. Hence the working alliance between him and the Socialists.

It would be a mistake to characterise the socialist attitude as only backing up of the winning horse. As in the case of Nehru, both sides benefitted from this alliance. Moreover it was a natural climax of the new trend in the socialist policy. That trend was towards left nationalists as opposed to the Communists. So far the left nationalists had been mainly absorbed by the Congress Socialist Party; with the coming of Subhas Chandra Bose, the left nationalists had gathered round his banner and though not organised in a bloc, followed him.

Jaiprakash and his party had certain differences with Subhas Bose. Shriyut Bose had criticised the Socialists in his book, "The Indian Struggle." But though he did not subscribe to all their socialist doctrines, he was generally in agreement with them. His views about Fascism and Nazism did not matter much then, because he had not organised "Samavadya Sangh" in India, but only decided on converting the Congress to his view with the help of his followers and as far as they could go, the Socialists.

He had no idea at that time of establishing any alternate leadership in the Congress. So giving help to him was perfectly consistent with the socialist programme of a united national front.

Thus, so far as the Socialists were concerned, Haripura session was as much a success as Lucknow and Faizpur sessions were. After Haripura session the party was once more eminent in Indian politics.

As Jaiprakash proved himself to be extremely efficient in matters of political alliances so was he swift in acting on behalf of the working class whenever the Congress Ministries trampled over their rights. And not only that. He was able to get legislation

beneficial to the tenants enacted in Bihar and U.P. The reforms proposed by Congress Ministries were not far-reaching but they were much more than a Labour Government in England or a Social Democratic Ministry in Germany could ever dream of enacting.

The Socialists were out of the Government, but they supported it much as the French Communists did the Blum regime after the 1936 elections, acting whenever working-class interests required, but preventing strikes and major industrial up-heavals likely to disrupt the government. The French Communists had always in view the greater enemy, Fascism. The Indian Socialists wanted to keep the struggle for Independence always in view.

How far this policy of caution in regard to strikes was right, it is difficult to say as the Socialists were sometimes not represented in the unions which decided on these strikes. These were either under the influences of the Communists or of the opportunists. But as the Communists too exercised considerable restraint in matters of agitation against the Congress Governments, the Socialists' stand is understandable from the viewpoint of national unity. It was in any case not a passive alliance with Gandhism and a policy of sympathetic attitude towards the ministries, while steam-roller of vested interests moved forward to crush the workers. As against such vested interests, the Socialists cast their weight with the working class.

laid down two basic conditions; one, a nation should have a secular base; and two, the polity of the nation should be restructured according to the needs and aspirations of the people so that it may enable every individual to take part in the decision-making process and development.

Jayaprakash Narayan based his thinking on two important ideas of Freedom and Equality and to implement these he sought to bring about a revolution. He visualised a revolution which would usher in socio-political order enshrining these ideals. The ideals of freedom and equality led him from Gandhi to Marx and back again to Gandhi. In addition to these influences Jayaprakash Narayan was also influenced by the ideals of western democracy. All these influences left their impression on his mind and finally resulted in the evolution of a political philosophy, based on synthesis of the three main currents of thought—Gandhism. Marxism and democracy—which can be be called as Gandhian Socialism.

It would be uncharitable to call Jayaprakash Narayan as an arm-chair philosopher. His views were basically conditioned by his experiences during a long and active political life, dedicated not to the pursuit of power either for himself or for his group, but to certain cherished ideals and values. In other words, Jayaprakash Narayan's experience of life may be described as a quest for a political system, a quest for a better society for all round development. All his writings exhibited his deep concern not only for the freedom of Indian people, but also for the freedom of man everywhere. This freedom, Jayaprakash felt, could not be bargained either for the sake of power and position or for anything else.

His passion for freedom of the mind; freedom of spirit; and freedom of human personality; as well as deep concern for the problems of the downtrodden people of India made him no slave of any particular political system or ideology. He always kept his mind open and remained susceptible to any political ideology or system, whatever it might be, provided he could perceive in it a greater possibility of the attainment of important human values of equality, freedom, brotherhood and peace. Like Gandhi, Jayaprakash also emphasised the importance of morality for all persons, including the politicians, so that there may be inter-connenction between thought and deed as well as a strong

sense of public accountability.

Because Jayaprakash was very much concerned for freedom and morality, he opposed totalitarianism in all its forms. He believed in the Gandhian ideal of a political system in which state intervention was minimum and community initiative was maximum. This led him to formulate a system of 'Panchayati Raj' functioning within the framework of 'partyless democracy'. To usher in such a 'communitarian society' which would completely change the present structure and system of Indian polity. He gave a call for "Total Revolution."

Jayaprakash Narayan was above selfishness or egoism and was completely devoted to the welfare of humantiy at large. He was a multi-dimensional and epoch-making personality.

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